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HOMELY  
BALLADS.



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# HOMELY BALLADS

FOR THE

WORKING MAN'S FIRESIDE.

BY MARY SEWELL.

*FIFTH THOUSAND.*

LONDON:

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## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

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**DURING** many years of friendly intercourse with her poorer friends and neighbours, the Author has frequently observed the poetry in a book to be the first part which draws their attention—that, with children, there is a general desire to commit verse to memory, and that the parent's ear is ever open to listen whilst they repeat the hymn or the story which is told in rhyme.

The Author believes—and her opinion is confirmed by others intimately conversant with the minds of the working classes in different parts of the country—that there exists amongst them generally, an instinctive love and appreciation of simple descriptive poetry ; and that, both morally and intellectually, it is of more importance to them to have the imagination cultivated and refined by the higher sentiment of poetry, than it can be to those who have the advantage of a liberal education ; to the one, it is a luxury—to the other, an almost needful relaxation from the severe and irksome drudgery of their daily lot.

## PREFACE.

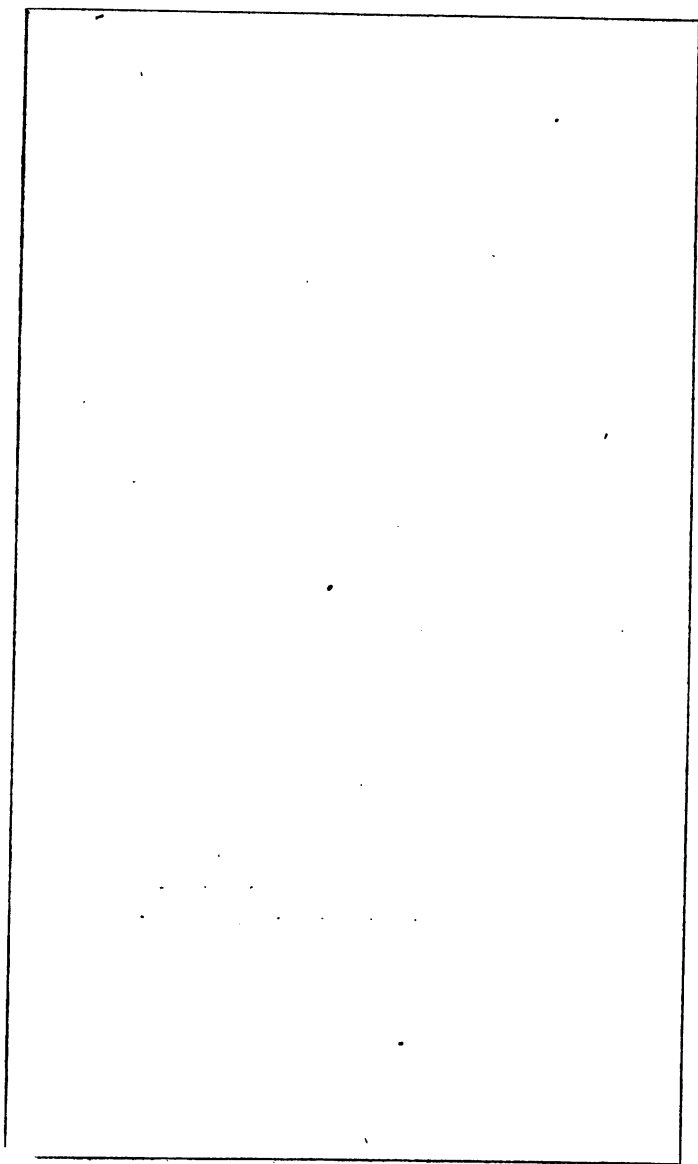
With these convictions, the Author has endeavoured to throw some of her thoughts into the following homely verses. But, in offering them as a small contribution to the working man's library, she is conscious how slightly they express her earnest sympathy and interest—her heartfelt admiration and respect for the noble-hearted, patient, and industrious workers in our native land, by whose unceasing toil, the more wealthy are exempted from similar labour, and are surrounded by the comforts and enjoyments of life.

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# HOMELY BALLADS

## FOR THE WORKING MAN'S FIRESIDE.

---

### FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

---

A GALLANT ship went out to sea  
From Scotland's rocky shore,  
And with her sail'd one hundred men  
To dig for golden ore.

The anchor rose, the sails were set,  
And steady blew the breeze ;  
And merrily the vessel went  
Across the tossing seas.

From morn till night her course she kept,  
The land was still in view,  
And passengers upon the deck  
Oft sigh'd a long adieu.

The second day was at an end,  
And night came slowly down ;  
But still upon the distant coast  
They saw a lighted town.

Then darkness settled on the ship,  
And o'er the ocean crept,  
And, ere the middle of the night,  
All, but the seamen, slept.

Oh! many went to sleep that night,  
On whom no morn shall rise;  
And many closed their eyelids then,  
To waken in the skies.

And many hearts beat true and warm,  
For those they ne'er would save;  
And many hopes were buried then,  
Beneath the green sea wave.

A heavy fog came stealing down,  
And o'er the waters spread,  
So thick, the steersman scarce could see  
A dozen yards ahead.

There was a moment, and no more,  
No warning cross'd the sea,—  
An Indiaman, with crowded sails,  
Bore down upon their lee.

No time to tack, to give her room,  
No time to wake the men;  
The mighty vessel ran them down,  
Then bore away again.

The eddying waves closed o'er the wreck,  
Then roll'd on as before;  
And that ship's company went down,  
To sail the sea no more.

A fisherman upon the beach,  
At early break of day,  
Observed an object on the tide,  
That roll'd within the bay.

'Twas not the seaweed's heavy mass  
Which clogg'd the billow's swell;  
'Twas not the wood of rifted wreck,  
That floated on so well.

The fisherman strode boldly in,  
And, ere it reach'd the strand,  
He seized upon a floating form,  
And bore it to the land.

It was a child—a little girl—  
Of some ten years or more,  
That here the cold, remorseless wave  
Was casting on the shore.

And pitiful the look he bent  
On that young form so fair;  
And tenderly he wiped the face,  
And wrung the heavy hair.

"I'll take her home to Margaret,  
And see what she can do;  
If life is in the body yet,  
She's sure to bring it to."

Within his dwelling on the beach  
He laid the body down;  
And every means the good wife used,  
That she had heard, or known.

The youthful limbs were barely hid  
By clothing for the night ;  
And heavy lay the closed lids  
On eyes, that once were bright.

The soft round cheek was cold and blue,  
That erst was like the rose  
That opens in the early dew,  
When morning zephyr blows.

The sweet young mouth was tightly closed,  
As if 'twere closed in pain ;  
Oh ! will the warm blood ever tinge  
Those livid lips again ?

But Margaret's patience wearied not,  
She feels the warmth return,  
The little heart begins to move,  
The breath she can discern.

And do we say—"Thy cares forego,  
And let the floweret die,  
The tender bud, though blighted now,  
Will blossom in the sky.

"The storms of life may beat it down,  
And sin may yet prevail ;  
Or poverty, with cruel hand,  
May crush that flower so frail.

"Oh, let it die !" but so said not  
The heart of Margaret ;  
Her cheerful hope, like jewel bright  
In simple faith was set.

Life was to her a sacred gift,  
A high and priceless thing,  
To which the blessed Son of God,  
Did free salvation bring.

That grace came not to her in vain;  
She heard the heavenly voice,  
That often now within her soul,  
Said, "Margaret, rejoice!"

The living stream that heal'd her heart,  
Descending from above,  
Left not a barren soil behind,  
But rich in fruits of love.

The weeping stranger told her tale  
To no unfeeling ear;  
Her little brothers all were drown'd,  
And both her parents dear.

And she had no relations left,  
Now they were in the sea;  
They all had left their pleasant homes  
Upon the banks of Dee.

"Fear not, my lamb," said Margaret,  
"I will your mother be,  
And you shall be as merry here  
As on the banks of Dee.

"Here's Marianne, and Isabel,  
And John, and little Jane;  
And you shall be their sister dear,  
And think 'tis home again."

The little orphan raised her lips  
To kiss good Margaret's cheek ;  
But grief lay heavy on her heart,  
And words she could not speak.

But ere a many weeks had flown,  
Her sorrow died away,  
And little Jessie sang as blythe  
As merry birds in May.

Down to the fisher's lowly cot  
The busy neighbours came—  
"If you take in that friendless child,  
I think you 'll be to blame.

"I 'd send it to the Union-house,  
And there I 'd let her be."  
Said Margaret, "The Lord has sent  
That little one to me.

"I should not, of myself, have thought  
A thing like this to do ;  
But if God laid it out for me,  
Why, he will bring me through."

"You know," another kindly said,  
"You have already four ;  
And though you 're decent, honest folks,  
Still you are reckon'd poor."

"And we are poor, and very poor,  
I know," said Margaret ;  
"But God can show my husband where  
To cast his fishing-net.

“For He, who made the fish, you know,  
Can guide them as they swim;  
The widow, and the orphan child  
Hold promises from Him.”

“Well, you must please yourself, of course;  
But, in my humble thought,  
You’re taking on yourselves more care  
Than working-people ought.”

“It may be so—I know,” she said,  
“But still I am content;  
I have a feeling in my mind  
That we shall not repent.

“If your sweet darling, little Bell,  
Should ever have the lot  
To be shipwreck’d and cast away,  
And no friend near the spot,

“Would you not bless with all your heart  
The man who took her in,  
And made a father’s home for her  
In this sad world of sin?”

“Well, neighbour, that is very true,  
It makes my feelings stir,  
To think that such a cruel fate  
Could ever come to her.

“No doubt the gentlefolks would help  
If you would state the case;  
She is an interesting child,  
And has a pretty face.”



A cloud pass'd over Margaret's brow,  
But still her voice was kind—  
"I'd rather not ask charity,  
It always hurts my mind.

"And 'twill be time to think of that,  
If we should get too poor ;  
I think that He will bring her bread,  
Who brought her to our door."

And so the neighbours went away,  
And many shook their head ;  
They said she was a feeling soul,  
But woefully misled.

And Margaret—she sat down to read  
The book that gave her light,  
And, as she read, she strongly felt  
That she was doing right.

In fact, it seem'd as clear to her  
As noonday in the sun,  
That they would ne'er repent the thing,  
Which they in faith had done.

The fishing-boat went out to sea,  
The fishing-boat came back,  
And whichever way it went,  
The fish were in its track.

When raging tempests roused the sea,  
And sailors found their graves,  
Unharm'd the little fishing-boat  
Lay rocking in the waves.

For He who walk'd upon the sea,  
And chose His dearest friends  
From poor and lowly fishermen,  
The fishing-boat defends ;

No harm can ever touch the thing  
Committed to His care,  
Nor can a million voices drown  
The voice of earnest prayer.

And He repaid the simple trust  
Of faithful Margaret,  
And daily taught her husband where  
To cast the fishing-net.

The fishing-boat went out to sea,  
The fishing-boat came back,  
And whichever way it went,  
The fish were in its track.

And when with heavy-laden nets  
It reached the yellow sand,  
An active little party hail'd  
The fishing-boat to land.

To fill a basket or a pan  
The busy children strive,  
Then through the streets and in the squares  
They cry them "all alive."

And so the years flew quickly by  
Till Jessie was sixteen ;  
A sweeter little maiden then  
You hardly could have seen.

Both Marianne and Isabel  
Were married *well* and gone ;  
And Jessie now, with little Jane,  
Did all the work alone.

"'Tis early yet," said Margaret,  
"Come, set your basket down ;"  
For Jessie then had boil'd some shrimps  
To carry to the town.

"'Tis on my mind, dear child," she said,  
"I can't the reason give ;  
But something often says to me,  
I have not long to live.

"Nay, Jessie, do not turn so pale,  
You'll always have a friend ;  
I think that people need not want  
Who straight on God depend.

"And I believe they need not beg,  
If only they would try ;  
I'd rather want a thing myself,  
Than ask for charity.

"I would not have my children beg  
For all that I could see ;  
We've always held our heads above  
That sort of poverty.

"And mind me now, it is six years,  
If not a little more,  
Since you were brought a senseless corpse  
Unto this very door.

"And we have never known the day  
When we have wanted bread;  
Nor decent clothes to cover us,  
Nor shelter for our head.

"And you are almost all grown up,  
And with an honest name;  
Oh, Jessie! I should die at once  
If you should come to shame.

"I'm frightened now, to see the girls  
That walk about the street;  
Oh! God forbid a child of mine  
Should look like those I meet.

"I often quake for you, my dear,  
The others all are plain;  
But you have got that pretty face,  
That makes men look again.

"And some who're reckon'd gentlemen  
I know will notice you,  
And many pretty things they'll say,  
They never mean for true.

"I'd rather you should meet a bear  
That's just robb'd of her young,  
Than you should meet a gentleman  
Who has a flattering tongue.

"Be sure they never mean you good,  
'Tis only sport, or worse;  
And, as you'd save yourself, don't touch  
A penny from their purse."

A glow of modesty and pride  
Rush'd into Jessie's cheek,  
And feeling quiver'd on her lip  
As she began to speak.

"Dear mother! you may trust me well,  
Such thing shall never be;  
No saucy gentleman I know  
Shall ever speak to me.

"What business have they to insult  
A girl because she's poor?  
No! mother, I will never bring  
Dishonour to your door.

"Beside, I've found out *this* myself,  
And I believe 'tis true—  
That if *you* mind what you're about,  
*They'll* mind their business too."

"And, Jessie—John has whisper'd me  
That you must be his wife,  
And he's a gentleman in heart,  
And loves you like his life.

"Of course 'twill be a long while first,  
You both are very young;  
But if you love each other well,  
The time will not seem long."

"Ah, mother! John is just like you,  
He is so true and good,  
And steady, like his father too,  
I think 'tis in the blood."

Then Margaret kiss'd the pretty face  
That looked in hers, and smiled,  
"Ah, little puss! I see one day  
You'll be my very child.

"But, Jessie dear, still have a care,  
For woman's heart is weak."  
And tears rose up in Margaret's eyes,  
And trickled down her cheek.

A few short months—and suddenly  
There came the hand of death,—  
"God bless you all, and keep you his,"  
Was Margaret's latest breath.

Then did her happy ransom'd soul  
Arise on joyful wing,  
To dwell before her Saviour's throne,  
Where blessed angels sing.

No stately hearse with nodding plumes,  
Nor mutes for mourning paid,  
Were seen around the humble grave,  
Where Margaret was laid.

A dozen hardy fishermen,  
With weatherbeaten face,  
Bore that dear body tenderly  
To its last resting-place.

And many join'd the weeping train  
That stood around it there,  
And many were the stifled sobs  
That shook the quiet air;

For she was gone, whose life had been  
A constant flow of love,  
And they would see her face no more  
Until they met above.

Then Jessie kept the good man's house,  
And shared his heavy grief,  
Till time and resignation brought  
To both of them relief.

And when two years had pass'd away  
In honour of the dead,  
Her lover thought the time was come,  
When they might safely wed.

He was his father's partner now,  
They had a busy trade;  
And many times he counted up  
The earnings he had made.

The old man gave the bride away,  
And gave the wedding treat,  
And, kissing Jessie, said, "She'll be  
Another Margaret."

"Ay, that she will," said John; "she'll be  
My mother to the life,  
And folks will say my pretty bride  
Is like my father's wife."

---

Now, parents dear, who read this tale,  
Work on with love and prayer ;  
And children's children yet may live  
To bless your faithful care.

And shut not up your charity,  
Let pity have its way ;  
'Tis God you lend your service to,  
And He will richly pay.

The fishing-boat shall go to sea,  
The fishing-boat come back ;  
And Providence shall guide the boat,  
And fish be in its track.



THE FUNERAL BELL.

---

ALAS, for the village! alas, for the day!  
The church bell is tolling a funeral knell,  
Adam Hope from the parish is taken away,  
And a sorrowful sound has the funeral bell.

Oh! toll for him—toll for him, funeral bell!  
Fall sad on the heart, as you fall on the ear;  
Good neighbour, good master, good christian—farewell!  
Good husband, good father—in glory appear!

Oh! what will become of the destitute poor?  
He was eyes to the blind, he was feet to the lame;  
To the fatherless orphan he open'd his door,  
And the widow's heart sung at the sound of his name.

He put down oppression, he righted the wrong,  
The cause of the helpless, he made it his own;  
He wrested the weak from the grasp of the strong;  
His conduct was led by his conscience alone.

He hated those questions, so paltry and low—  
How *much* must I give? or how *little* will do?  
True charity taught him how much to bestow,  
He lived for the many, and not for the few.

He delighted to show his devotion and love ;  
He hated pretence, as the hypocrite's mask ;  
His soul, full of gratitude, mounted above,  
And "What shall I render?" he often would ask.

His heart was at rest ; he was blessed indeed,  
The love of the Poor, lay as dew on his head ;  
He spared of his comforts the hungry to feed,  
And he, from the storehouse of heaven was fed.

Good measure, press'd down, to his bosom return'd,  
Well shaken, o'erflowing, till room there was none ;  
Whilst brighter and brighter his light ever burn'd,  
Then sunk like the glow of the evening sun,

To rise, where the faithful, apparell'd in white,  
Stand round by the throne of their Saviour and King ;  
To work in His service with growing delight,  
Whilst the waves of eternity circle and sing.

But toll for him—toll for him, funeral bell !  
Fall sad on the heart, as you fall on the ear ;  
Good neighbour, good master, good christian—farewell !  
Good husband, good father—in glory appear !

THE MILLER'S WIFE

---

YOUNG Annie Smith was dairymaid  
At Brookland on the hill;  
The pretty farm that lies above  
Old Jacob Slater's mill.

A sweeter girl than Annie Smith  
Ne'er sung beside a cow;  
Her cheeks were like the morn itself,  
Or damask rose in blow.

Her shining hair, as black as jet,  
Was fasten'd close and tight;  
Her dress it fitted prettily,  
Her cap was snowy white.

She was a bonny little lass  
As e'er you'd look upon;  
No wonder, then, she stole the heart  
Of Slater's miller, John.

He went past Brookland every day,  
It was the thoroughfare,  
And always had a pleasant word  
To say, if Anne was there.

'Twas long before she heeded much  
The words he had to say;  
And, if he loiter'd by the door,  
She blush'd and went away.

But perseverance will prevail  
Where all is right and fair,  
And she became his happy bride,  
His weal and woe to share.

Her mistress said she would repent,  
She'd know the difference soon ;  
But Annie said, that " people liked  
A dwelling of their own."

No doubt sweet Anne had often thought  
That she would some day wed ;  
So put her money in the bank,  
And not upon her head.

She never liked a dashing dress,  
Her taste was always neat,  
And now her savings help'd to make  
Their little home complete.

For she had six or seven pounds,  
A mine, her lover thought ;  
And he had laid some money by,  
As every servant ought.

Between them both, with management,  
With industry, and skill,  
They bought sufficient furniture  
Their happy home to fill.

John was the foreman at the mill,  
Their cottage was close by ;  
It lay so handy for his work,  
And stood both warm and dry.

It had a plot of ground behind,  
A little piece before,  
And just a sort of rustic porch  
Around the pleasant door.

John made the porch, both he and Anne  
Were very fond of flowers,  
And work'd together happily  
In many leisure hours.

The piece of ground behind the house  
He cropp'd with earnest care ;  
You could not find a foot of earth  
Without some planting there.

He left no room for weeds to grow  
They could not lift a head  
Amongst the rows of cabbages,  
Or in the parsnip bed.

Some onions, parsley, thyme, and sage,  
Quite charm'd his Annie's eye ;  
She thought about her soup and stew,  
With potherbs savoury.

You really hardly would believe  
How many things there were,  
That John contrived to cultivate  
In his small garden there.

Anne often laugh'd a merry laugh,  
And would with triumph say—  
“If people had a will to do,  
They'd always find a way.”

The little garden in the front  
Was her especial care,  
And soon was full of scented flowers,  
That sweeten'd all the air.

She was a little fanciful  
About the flowers she set,  
And would not have a modern one  
Except the mignonette.

She liked old-fashion'd flowers, she said,  
That she in childhood knew ;  
The cabbage rose and gilliflower,  
And larkspurs, pink and blue.

The honeysuckle round the porch,  
The jasmine on the wall,  
The rich clovepink, and ten-week stock,  
And lilies, white and tall.

And many little flowers beside  
She planted in between ;  
The hen-and-chicken daisy there  
Was always to be seen.

She said 'twas like a family  
About their mother's knee—  
A pretty little pattern, too,  
Of what it ought to be.

But let us now go in with Anne,  
To see her table spread,  
And there, at once, we shall perceive  
A loaf of home-made bread.

John, sometimes, with a laugh would say,  
That he could make Anne cry,  
If he proposed that baker's bread  
Should feed their family.

She could not bear to hear it named—  
Such poor, unwholesome stuff;  
A quartern loaf was eaten up  
Before you had enough.

She always found it possible  
To get both yeast and flour;  
It only wanted management,  
The will—it brought the power.

They seldom spent their pence in tea,  
She said 'twas little good;  
That too much tea shook women's nerves,  
And also thinn'd the blood.

That was her notion. She and John  
Had porridge thick and hot;  
It was a hearty, wholesome food,  
And cheaper, Annie thought.

Her John had lived in Scotland once,  
Amongst the peasants there;  
And sometimes all his meals were made  
Upon this homely fare.

With such a breakfast, he would say,  
He never wanted beer;  
Yet not a workman at the mill  
With him could strength compare.

His mates would often sneer and laugh,  
And tempt him to "a pot;"  
But he would let them laugh away,  
He scorn'd to be a sot.

Tobacco he would never buy,  
But they afforded meat;  
And Anne was such a clever cook,  
His meals were quite a treat.

When winter came, and nights were long,  
They sat beside their fire;  
She knitted stockings thick and strong;  
He read, at her desire.

The public-house he never tried,  
He hated noise and strife;  
And loved so well his own fireside,  
And his sweet-temper'd wife.

At church, on Sunday, they were seen—  
Anne always had been there;  
And now, they both together went  
Up to the house of prayer.

Anne's mother always counsell'd her  
To make the Lord her stay;  
"Tis sunshine with you now, my dear,  
But you'll be forced to pray.

"For clouds may gather, one by one,  
And you will want a friend;  
If you don't know his face before,  
'Twill then seem far to send."



Anne always thought her mother was  
The pattern of a wife ;  
And now she tried to copy her  
In this sweet married life.

So happily the weeks flew by,  
Till just a year was o'er ;  
And then a little stranger came  
To John the miller's door.

There was no peal of merry bells,  
No cannon thunder'd loud ;  
But Annie she was very glad,  
And John was very proud.

He said 'twas like his little wife,  
So bright its black eyes shone ;  
But she was sure 'twas just like him—  
Her own good husband, John.

But let that pass. The baby grew,  
And soon could crow and pull ;  
It must be own'd the mother thought  
Her child was wonderful !

He ran about at ten months old,  
And soon could lisp her name ;  
And all the babies of his age  
He fairly put to shame.

Oh, Anne! your mother told you true,  
That clouds would gather soon ;  
And we must see the shade of night  
Pass over Annie's noon.

There came a gentle angel down  
From heaven's shining bowers,  
To take the precious little one  
From this cold world of ours.

Her own sweet darling pet, she thought,  
It must get well again ;  
But fever parch'd its burning lips,  
Its head was full of pain.

All night she watch'd beside its bed,  
The owl went hooting by ;  
And, ere the early morning red,  
The lark was in the sky.

She could not hear the skylark sing,  
Nor see the rising sun ;  
Her heart was with the little one,  
Whose day was nearly done.

A shade is passing o'er his cheek ;  
The sun begins to rise ;  
It shines upon the window pane,  
But death has closed his eyes.

She wept there long and bitterly ;  
Her heart was stricken through  
To see her little flower escape,  
Like early morning dew.

She smooth'd his glossy ringlets down,  
As smiling there he lay ;  
She kiss'd the little waxen cheek,  
And then knelt down to pray.

And peace came back to Anne again,  
Yet long it was before  
She could forget the little step  
That trotted round her door.

And often, on the Sabbath eve,  
She went with John to see  
The swelling mound of grassy turf  
Beneath the churchyard tree.

She planted there the primrose pale,  
And daisies pink and white,  
To make her little angel's bed  
Look beautiful and bright.

But soon another baby came,  
And very soon another ;  
And now the parents saw, with pride,  
A sister and a brother.

And they were fed on porridge too,  
Anne firmly stood to that ;  
And certainly the children grew  
Exceeding fair and fat.

She did not stuff their little mouths  
With cakes and lumps of meat ;  
She said that porridge was the thing  
That children ought to eat.

How many pence they saved by thrift  
Was more than they could say ;  
But money in the Savings Bank  
John weekly put away.

'Twas well he did : we do not know  
When want is drawing nigh ;  
With Anne, it was the washing-day,  
Her clothes were out to dry.

"They'll soon be dry, the wind is up,  
They'll get a famous blow ;"  
She liked to see her linen look  
As white as driven snow.

Then in she ran, and soon the soup  
Was made, with right good-will ;  
"It is so good to-day," she said,  
"He'll smell it at the mill."

She hears a groan, a shuffling tread,  
And people talking low ;  
And to the cottage door she flew,  
Like arrow from a bow.

Upon a door they bore a man,  
His face was ashy pale ;  
It needed not that any one  
Should tell poor Anne the tale.

She saw her husband's leg was broke  
In working at the mill.  
The doctor came and set it right,  
And told him to lie still.

John's master was a careless man ;  
He quite forgot the case,  
When he had found another hand  
To take his foreman's place.

Bear up, dear hearts! though selfish men  
May pass you coldly by,  
You have a Friend omnipotent,  
Who can your wants supply.

Fail not yourselves—He will not fail;  
It is most true, indeed,  
That God delighteth every day  
His little ones to feed.

Don't think it is a barren form  
To supplicate and pray;  
There never was an humble soul,  
Unpitied, sent away.

God has the world in his control,  
With all its stores of gold;  
He sends it forth, a flowing stream,  
In ways that can't be told.

The needy poor for water seek,  
Their tongue with thirst is dry;  
He opens in the wilderness  
A fountain for supply.

Cheer up, dear hearts! the Lord is near,  
And do not be afraid—  
But calmly trust His providence,  
And prove what he has said.

It was the time of trouble now,  
Poor Anne was sorely tried;  
With wages stopp'd, and garden waste,  
And food to be supplied.

And John, poor man! he could not help  
Sometimes to fret and mope;  
But Anne had ever cheerful words  
To keep alive his hope.

It would have been an easy thing,  
When she was tired out,  
To slap and scold the little ones,  
Who ran and scream'd about.

But she could rule her temper well,  
A greater feat by far,  
Than e'en to take a citadel  
That's held by men of war.

She turn'd her hand to every thing,  
She still was stout and strong;  
Though John, he thought her rosy face  
Was getting pale and long.

And she kept up her spirit well,  
For she had peace within;  
And well knew where to carry all  
Her trouble, and her sin.

She often said, within herself,  
"What shall we do to-morrow?"  
But when the day was fairly come,  
She did not beg nor borrow.

The quiet stream of Providence  
Kept flowing on—and on;  
'Twas often Anne's astonishment,  
And wonderful to John.

It is so easy to forget  
That God a father is,  
Who loves his children, better far  
Than earthly parent his.

The money in the Savings Bank  
Had all been taken out ;  
And John upon a crutch and stick  
Was hobbling about.

"'Tis no use talking now," said he,  
The workhouse is our home ;  
'Tis long ere I shall work, you see,  
And we've to nothing come."

"Oh, John!" said Anne, "though we have nought,  
Our God is still the same ;  
Keep up your heart, my husband dear,  
We will not come to shame."

She spoke so cheerily to him,  
She saw his heart was dull ;  
But, as she sat alone at work,  
Her own was very full.

She read the chapter through and through  
About the widow's meal ;  
The little oil, the gather'd sticks,  
And thought what she must feel.

"We are not brought so low as that,  
Some helper still may come ;  
It seems to me—I can't tell why)—  
That we shall keep our home."

And so she stitch'd away again,  
More briskly than before ;  
Until she heard her husband's crutch  
Move slowly to the door.

For so it fell—that afternoon  
Old Slater came along ;  
“ Ah, John !” said he, “ I'm glad to see  
Your leg is getting strong.

“ We want you sadly at the mill,  
The men the labour shirk ;  
I'll give you half your wages now  
To overlook the work.

“ A foreman's eye about the house,  
An honest workman's eye,  
Is like a cat before a mouse—  
It makes the idlers fly.”

John thank'd his master, said he'd come,  
And then he sought for Anne ;  
“ Well, wife,” he said, “ thanks be to God,  
I'm now another man !

“ I think I've learn'd to trust in God—  
I think I've learn'd to-day ;  
I really think, and do believe,  
He hears a poor man pray.”

He told her how he pray'd with tears,  
Still fear'd he pray'd in vain ;  
Then, how his master came that way,  
And gave him work again.



He said, "Dear Anne, you've always been  
The comfort of my life ;  
What should I do without you now,  
My precious little wife !

"'Twas you that kept my spirits up,  
'Twas you kept bed and board ;"  
But Annie kiss'd his cheek, and said,  
"Dear John ! it was the Lord."

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Poor women ! in this world of toil  
Keep up your hearts with prayer ;  
Still trust in God, and do your best—  
You never need despair.

ABEL HOWARD AND HIS FAMILY.

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"I'm thinking, cook," 'twas thus a lady said  
To an old servant, kneading up some bread,  
"That I should like a steady girl to take,  
To do the dairy work, and help to bake;  
Your work is heavy, and the house is large,  
And you have many duties to discharge;  
I would on no account impose on you  
More work than you can comfortably do;  
But, really now, 'tis difficult to find  
A girl brought up according to one's mind;  
They are so flighty and so fond of dress,  
So idle, forward, and discretionless!  
There are exceptions to the rule, no doubt,  
That only need some pains to find them out:  
Perhaps you know a girl you would prefer,  
Whose parents bear an honest character."

"I thank you, ma'am," the careful Phebe said,  
And cover'd up the rising mass of bread;  
"What you have said of girls is very just,  
And more's the pity—that you cannot trust  
One, out of twenty; if you are away  
They're sure to be in mischief, or at play.  
I can't tell what folks think of now-a-days,  
To use their children to such shiftless ways!

It wasn't so, I know, when I was young :  
I had to work betimes, and hold my tongue,  
And mind my parents, and my betters too,  
But that old-fashioned way is something new  
To our great boys and girls, who seem to rule  
As soon as they have left the village school.  
But there is Mrs. Howard, down the lane,  
You could not find a better girl than Jane,  
She'll make a servant to your very mind !  
But then her parents aren't the common kind,  
As one might say : their children do not run  
Before the work of teaching is begun.  
I'm sure 'tis quite a pleasure now to see  
Such an industrious happy family ;  
On Sunday morn it really is a sight  
To see them all at church, so clean and bright !  
The baby's quite a pattern to the rest,  
Upon its mother's lap so neatly dress'd !  
I've watch'd it many a time, the pretty elf,  
And found the child a sermon to myself.  
I think you might go far, and seek in vain,  
Before you found a better girl than Jane ;  
So modest—cleanly—quiet as a mouse !  
The girl would be a credit to the house.”  
“We'll try her, Phebe, and I've little doubt  
You'll make a cook of her, quite out and out.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“John,” said his master to a faithful groom  
Cleaning a stall out with his stable broom ;

"You work too hard, old fellow, all the day,—  
We don't grow stronger as we're growing grey;  
'Tis now just forty years you've lived with me,  
I do not want the last of you to see;  
The place would quite be puzzled to go on  
Without your honest face to look upon.  
See for a lad, a strong and trusty boy,  
And train him up to suit a groom's employ;  
The little urchins! 'tis a puzzle now  
To trust a boy to lead a horse at plough.  
It is not ignorance; the boys are smart,  
They know enough to make their masters start;  
But school is not sufficient, that's a truth  
One can't but see amongst our rising youth,  
And there is certainly a fault somewhere—  
I've heard myself a very infant swear;  
I don't see how to mend it, but 'tis clear  
We've lost a notch in manly character;  
But we must have a boy, so do your best,  
A good old servant shall not be oppress'd."

John listen'd silently, then bow'd his head,  
Fully approving what his master said.  
"I'm sure I thank you, sir, for your regard."  
"Not so at all, John, 'tis your just reward;  
For all your faithful service night and day,  
I owe you more than I can ever pay.  
A faithful servant, serving as your friend,  
Is such a gift as God alone can send.  
But now about the boy—perhaps you know  
One that will do, if you will teach him how."

“There’s young Tom Howard, Abel Howard’s son,  
A better lad I ne’er set eyes upon.  
I should not fear to trust that boy a bit  
To take my place as soon as he was fit.  
I often see him with his father’s team;  
The very horses are so fond of him.  
I’ve mark’d it scores of times, and found it suit,  
And judge a boy as he will treat a brute.  
Suppose I see him speak a pony fair,  
Rubbing his nose, and stroking down his hair,  
Driving the sheep, and keeping back the dog,  
Feeling a man although he does not flog,  
Walking with patient step behind the cows,  
Leaving a donkey quietly to browse;  
I’d trust that boy to have a kindly heart,  
And that of men, I think, the better part.  
But those young rascals, with their whips and sticks,  
Never contented till a donkey kicks;  
Slashing the horses for a bit of fun,  
Stoning a dog to make him yelp and run;  
Always contriving how they can torment  
Some harmless creature for their merriment—  
Now, one of these—it might be reckon’d hard—  
I would not have him in the stable-yard;  
But young Tom Howard I should like to try.  
That boy would suit us to a nicety.  
So civil, so industrious, and kind!  
I think he’d be entirely to your mind.  
And then his bringing up has been so good—  
The stock is sound, and so the younger wood;

There's not a man round here that can compare  
With Abel Howard as to character.  
A sober, honest, independent man ;  
Search round the place, and match him if you can.  
And there's the mother and the girls—in short,  
They fill their place as working-people ought."

"We'll try him, John, at once; I do not fear  
But he will suit us well, from what I hear."

\* \* \* \* \*

A clever nurseryman, with gardens fair,  
And spacious houses full of all things rare,  
Was going carefully his usual rounds,  
And call'd to Simon working in the grounds—  
"The weeds and grass are growing here apace,  
This piece of ground will soon be our disgrace.  
We want a hand into the garden now—  
A steady boy to weed the beds, and hoe.  
Most of the lads don't know the weeds from flowers,  
That will not do in such a place as ours.  
D'ye know a lad we could depend upon?"

"There's young George Howard, Abel's second son;  
The eldest boy has got a famous place  
To help the groom, who lives with Squire Chase.  
But George is quite as good, for ought I see,—  
They're all brought up with care and industry.  
I mostly see him, as I pass at night,  
At work at home to make their garden right,

And often stop to have a bit of chat ;  
He thinks that I can teach him this and that.  
He told me, t' other night, how glad he'd be  
To work in this great garden here with me.  
If you thought well, I'd call in going home,  
And tell him, in the morning, just to come.  
It would be quite the making of the boy  
To get in here for regular employ ;  
I'd answer for him as to character,  
And that's no trifle in our garden, sir."

"That's true, indeed ! a man may know the flowers,  
And work all day the common round of hours ;  
But if his character won't bear the light,  
He can't be trusted when he's out of sight.  
But this George Howard seems the proper sort ;  
I'll try him, Simon, on your own report.  
But stop a bit : you said the family  
Were all brought up with care and industry.  
Have they a girl, think you, would suit my wife,  
To nurse a babe as precious as her life ?  
Not one of those low, careless girls we meet,  
Who stop to stare and gossip in the street ;  
And leave the children in the dirt and noise,  
Whilst they are prating to a lot of boys.  
There are some girls, I've heard, who do delight  
To nurse a baby, morning, noon, and night.  
My wife wants one of these."

"Then, truly, sir,  
I know of one not far from suiting her.

'Tis little Susan, sister to the boy  
I just have mention'd for our own employ.  
Of all the girls that I have ever seen  
For nursing children, Susan is the queen.  
She's just a woman as to thought and care,  
But merry as a lark up in the air.  
'Tis wonderful how fond they are of her ;  
There's nobody like Susan any where.  
I call her 'little hen'—a bit of fun—  
She gives a cluck, and all the chickens run."

" Well, Simon, when her brother comes to me,  
Let Susan come, and then my wife will see.  
A clever workman, I have always said,  
With character, will never want his bread ;  
Nor find his children hanging on his hands,  
If he is doing what his place demands."



THE THIEVES' LADDER.

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THE boys were skating on the pond,  
And sliding on the mere,  
And talking with an appetite  
About their Christmas cheer.

One lad would feast on ribs of beef,  
And famous hot mince-pies ;  
Another, with a leg of pork,  
Would carry off the prize.

And such a goose as ne'er was seen  
To swim upon the mere,  
With sage and onions all complete,  
Quite carried round a cheer !

Another lad, with sparkling eyes  
And boastful manner, said,  
That he should have a pudding too,  
As big as father's head.

And so, with mirth and merry shout,  
They follow'd on their play,  
And threw the snowballs all about,  
And long'd for Christmas day.

Oh ! there were busy doings then,  
Amongst both rich and poor ;  
For Christmas day brings happiness  
To every body's door.

The girls were helping in the house,  
With bustle and with show,  
And told the boys to go away,  
And not disturb them so.

And boys went whistling down the streets,  
And looking in the shops  
At tempting heaps of oranges,  
And piles of sugar-drops.

"Here, Willie, to the grocer's run;  
Be sharp, now—there's a man,  
And bring me home a pound of plums  
As quickly as you can!

"Don't touch a plum—be sure you don't;  
To-morrow you shall eat."

"I won't," he said, and, like a top,  
Went spinning down the street.

The grocer weigh'd them in his scales,  
And there was one too much;  
He took it out, and all was right,  
The scale was to a touch.

He wrapp'd them up in whitey-brown,  
And tied them with a string,  
And put the money in the till,  
As 't were a common thing.

Young Willie watch'd, with greedy eyes,  
As this affair went on.  
The plums—they look'd so very nice!  
He wouldn't take but *one*.

So going quick behind a post,  
He tore the paper so  
That he could take out two or three,  
And nobody would know.

There was a little voice that said,  
Close by, in Willie's heart,  
"Don't tear the hole—don't take the plum—  
Don't play a thievish part!"

The little voice—it spoke in vain!  
He reach'd his mother's door;  
She did not see the hole he'd made,  
His trouble then was o'er.

And what a trifling thing it seem'd,  
To take one single plum!  
A little thing we hold between  
Our finger and our thumb.

And yet, upon that Christmas eve,  
That period so brief,  
Young Willie set his foot upon  
"The ladder of the thief!"

And as he lay awake that night,  
He heard his parents speak;  
He heard distinctly what they said,  
The blood rush'd to his cheek.

He lay and listen'd earnestly;  
They might have found him out,  
And he might get a flogging too,  
'Twas that he thought about.

A guilty person cannot rest,  
He always is in fear ;  
Not knowing what may happen next  
To make his guilt appear.

So, when he heard his mother speak,  
He rose up in his bed,  
And did not lose a syllable  
Of every word she said :—

“ We have not any turnips, John,  
I could not spare the pence ;  
But you can go and get us some  
Through Farmer Turner's fence.

“ There 's nobody to see you now,  
The folks are off the road ;  
The night looks dark and blustering,  
And no one is abroad.

“ It is not far—you'll soon be back—  
I 'll stand outside to hear ;  
The watchman now is off his track,  
And won't be coming near.”

The father he went softly out,  
And down the lane he crept,  
And stole some turnips from the field  
Whilst honest people slept !

’Tis not the words that parents say,  
It is their very deed ;  
Their children know the difference,  
And follow where they lead.

How often, if their lives are good,  
Their children's are the same ;  
Whilst, if they 're thievish, drunken, bad,  
Their children come to shame !

Now, Willie laid him down in bed,  
His conscience found relief ;  
" I'm not the only one," he said—  
" My father is a thief !

" How foolish 'twas to be afraid  
About a little plum !"  
He pull'd the bed-clothes o'er his head,  
And dream'd of feasts to come.

On Christmas-day they had the pies,  
The turnips, and the beef ;  
And Willie's foot was firm upon  
The ladder of the thief.

And ere the snow was on the plain,  
And Christmas-day came round,  
And boys were sliding, once again,  
Upon the frozen ground,

He, step by step, had further gone  
Upon that dreadful road  
That brings a man to misery,  
And takes him far from God.

He cheated with his marbles first,  
And then at other play ;  
He pilfer'd any little thing  
That came within his way.

His parents did not punish him ;  
He went from bad to worse,  
Until he grew so confident,  
He stole a lady's purse.

Then he was seized, and brought before  
The city magistrate ;  
And the police and lady came  
The robbery to state.

And Willie he was proved a thief,  
And nothing had to say ;  
So to the dreadful prison-house  
He soon was led away.

In vain he cried, and pleaded hard  
They would not take him there ;  
He would not do such things again  
If they would hear his prayer.

It was too late ! The prison door,  
With bolt, and bar, and chain,  
Was open'd to take Willie in,  
And then was shut again.

He saw the handcuffs on the wall,  
The fetters on the floor ;  
And heavy keys with iron rings  
To lock the dungeon door.

He saw the little, lonely cells  
Where prisoners were kept,  
And all the dreary passages,  
And bitterly he wept.

And through the strong-barr'd iron grate,  
High up and far away,  
He saw a piece of clear blue sky  
Out in the blessed day.

And, "Oh!" he said, "my brothers now  
Are out of school again;  
And playing marbles on the path,  
Or cricket on the plain.

"And here am I, shut up so close  
Within this iron door;  
If ever I get out again  
I'll give this business o'er."

And Willie went to sleep that night  
In his dark cell alone;  
But often in his troubled dreams  
He turn'd with heavy moan.

What sound is that at early morn  
That breaks upon his ear?  
A funeral bell is tolling slow,  
It tolls so very near.

And in the court he sees a crowd,  
So haggard and so pale,  
And they are whispering fearfully  
A sad and awful tale.

And all seem looking at a man  
Who stands with fetters bound,  
And guards and executioner  
Are gather'd close around.

And he beheld that wretched man  
Who trembled like a leaf;  
His foot no more would stand upon  
The ladder of the thief.

For he had climb'd it step by step,  
Till murder closed the whole;  
The hangman came to take his life,  
But where would be his soul?

And still the bell went tolling on;  
It toll'd so heavily  
As that young man went up the stairs,  
Out to the gallows-tree.

It toll'd—it toll'd—Oh, heavy sound!  
It stopp'd—the deed is o'er;  
And that young man upon the earth  
Will now be seen no more.

Oh! parents watch your little ones,  
Lest you have such a grief;  
Help not their tender feet to climb  
The ladder of the thief.

I have not heard young Willie's end,  
I hope he learn'd that day;  
But 'tis a thing most difficult  
To leave a wicked way.

Yet still I know that God is good,  
Most pitiful and kind;  
And, if the wanderer turns to Him  
In humbleness of mind,



If he will leave his former ways,  
And choose a better road,  
He'll find a Saviour true to help,  
And pardon from his God.

## THE GUILTY CONSCIENCE; OR, HELL BEGUN.

FOUNDED ON FACT.

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“COMRADE, listen! night is waning,  
I must sail at break-of-day,  
In the vessel bound for England,  
Now at anchor in the bay.

“Sit and watch to-night beside me,  
’Tis the last request I make;  
Sit and talk away the hours  
Till the light of morning break.

“I can bear my life no longer,  
All I wish, is not to be;  
Flames of hell can burn no stronger  
Than the fire that burns in me.

“Now, the worm that never dieth  
Gnaws my spirit day by day;  
Eating, like a cruel canker,  
All my happiness away.

“Oh! my spirit loathes the morning,  
As it dreads the fall of night;  
For the sunbeams seem to mock me  
With their gay and gladsome light.

“ And the darkness, bringing slumber  
To the pure and guiltless head,  
Peoples all the void around me  
With the spirits of the dead.

“ Should my eyelids close a moment  
In the weary watch they keep,  
Startled, by a scream of terror,  
All my throbbing pulses leap.

“ If I gaze into the darkness,  
Two deep eyes are meeting mine,  
Fix'd and rayless, gazing through me  
With a clear unearthly shine.

“ Ten long years they have pursued me  
With that fix'd, unflinching stare ;  
Ten long years that shriek at midnight  
Has awoke the startled air.

“ I will tell you—'twas in Suffolk,  
Ere I left my native land,  
That I dyed my hand in murder—  
Still, the blood is on my hand.

“ When 'tis dark I always see it  
Dropping down—you see it now—  
Dropping, dropping, with a noiseless  
Fall upon the ground below.

“ See you nothing—nothing, comrade ?  
Look at this—this spot and stain,  
On my clothes—and in my eyeballs,  
Sinking inward to my brain.

"She was joyous as the dayspring,  
Innocent as lamb at play;  
And she loved me as her lover—  
Gave her simple heart away;

"Gave her simple heart to love  
Me, a demon fierce and foul!  
Then I sought to shame and wrong her;  
But she had an angel's soul,

"And she scorn'd me, then we quarrell'd,  
I was strong, and she was weak;  
By this hand the child was murder'd,—  
Comrade!—did you hear that shriek?

"Oh! I heard it ring to heaven,  
And my thrilling flesh doth creep;  
'Tis that shriek I hear at midnight  
Breaking up my fever'd sleep.

"Often round the foaming tankard,  
When our messmates fill the hall,  
Shouting in their drunken revels,  
That shriek rings above them all.

"When the murderer was sought for,  
Strong suspicion on me came;  
But I had the hellish cunning  
To protect myself from blame.

"Demon I was!—coward! villain!  
For I schemed a crafty plan,  
To affix the guilt and murder  
On a harmless labouring man.

"He was brought upon his trial,  
Nought avail'd that he could say ;  
For I stood, a lying witness,  
And I swore his life away.

"The judge's sentence was to hang him,  
Not the least remorse had I ;  
If he suffer'd for the murder,  
All suspicion then would die.

" 'I would see the rascal hanging !'  
With indignant warmth I said ;  
And I gather'd with the people  
When from prison he was led.

"Calm and pallid, there I saw him,  
Scanning all the people o'er ;  
Till his eyes he fix'd upon me—  
Fix'd on mine, for evermore.

" 'Twas as if I'd lost my senses,  
I could only stand and stare ;  
Some strong power of fascination  
Riveted my eyeballs there.

"Till the gallows and the people,  
All confused, look'd swimming round ;  
Then a giddy faintness seized me,  
And I sunk upon the ground.

"Sense return'd, and all around me  
Went on gaily as before ;  
But his eyes were fix'd upon me—  
Fix'd on mine, for evermore.

"If I labour'd in the cornfields,  
There, those steady eyes would gleam;  
If I work'd amongst the woodlands,  
There, the birds would mock her scream.

"Then I drank, to drown my senses,  
Join'd in mirth and revelry;  
Laugh'd and jested with the maddest,  
So to cheat my agony.

"But it could not so be cheated—  
I was like the monster Cain;  
And the guiltless blood was crying,  
Where it never cries in vain.

"Stay, I could not in my country,  
Every eye seem'd watching me;  
I enlisted for a soldier,  
And was sent beyond the sea.

"For I thought the dead would never  
Sail with me across the waves;  
If I left my native country,  
They would slumber in their graves.

"Oh! how freely on the ocean  
Did I breathe and move once more;  
E'en the tempest's wild commotion  
Seem'd to give my spirit power.

"Every muscle grew elastic,  
Life through every fibre ran;  
And my spirits rose to action—  
Once again I felt a man.

“ Round I gazed upon the billows,  
Roaring in their angry play;  
Diving down in deep abysses,  
Foaming up in wreaths of spray.

“ O'er the vessel's bulwark leaping,  
Flying upward to the sail,  
Whilst the ship, in conscious power,  
Ran before the steady gale.

“ It was night, but scarcely darkness,  
Linger'd still the glow of even;  
Where the spangled moonlit waters  
Stretch'd away to melt in heaven.

“ 'Twas so still, that e'en the seamen  
Told their stories soft and low;  
And the helmsman at the rudder  
Lightly steer'd the silent prow.

“ I stood there, and watch'd the moonlight,  
Caring not to think or speak;  
When across the trembling waters  
Rung a wild and piercing shriek.

“ Oh! I knew it in a moment,  
She had follow'd on my track;  
And my curdling flesh and spirit  
Sunk upon that torture-rack.

“ Words were never meant to picture  
Sounds of more than earthly dread;  
But that shriek would shake and rouse me  
Though I slumber'd with the dead.

"Where is *He*? my spirit whisper'd;  
Round a shuddering glance I cast;  
There they were, those rayless eyeballs!  
Gazing at me from the mast.

"Oft my senses seem to wander,  
And I fancy 'tis a dream;  
Till I start again, awaken'd  
By that ne'er forgotten scream.

"Oh! I know they are the heralds  
Of the everlasting years;  
They will pass death's gloomy portals  
To pursue my soul with fears.

"Where the worm, undying, stingeth;  
Where the fires, unquenched, burn;  
Where forgiveness never cometh;  
Where the heart can never turn.

"Comrade—friend! the light is breaking  
Slowly o'er the sullen bay;  
Soon the boatswain will be piping,  
And the ship get under weigh.

"Home to England I am going,  
To confess my hellish lie—  
To acknowledge to the murder,  
Then, the murderer will die.

"I can bear my life no longer,  
All I wish, is not to be;  
Flames of hell can burn no stronger  
Than the fire that burns in me.



" Friend, farewell ! the anchor's rising,  
Pray that I may be forgiven ;  
Oh, my comrade ! hear the warning—  
Cast your anchor firm in heaven."

Once again in England landed,  
Every day he seem'd to grudge,  
Till he stood to give his witness,  
Self-accused, before the judge.

There he gave the proof they needed  
To convict him of the crime ;  
Help'd them out in every question—  
Show'd them both the place and time ;

All the mystery and obstruction  
Clear'd away by force of truth ;  
Like a plaintiff seeking favour,  
Not a culprit fearing wrath.

All was said—the case was perfect—  
Evidence as clear as day ;  
Not another link was wanted,  
Wherefore, then, the verdict stay ?

On that plain, once more, are gather'd,  
Round about a gallows high,  
Crowds of people, mutely gazing  
On a man condemn'd to die.

Not a whisper broke the silence,  
Not a murmur shook the air ;  
Wherefore looks the man around him  
On the crowd assembled there ?

Does a face steal from the distance,  
Through the long-departed years?  
Does the voice of maiden pleading  
Thrill upon his dying ears?

That we know not—he departed—  
God in heaven knows the rest;  
Human beings err in judgment,  
Leave to Him the guilty breast.

But, before with crime we trifle,  
And the Almighty justice dare,  
Think—how could we bear the anguish  
Of eternal, black despair!

THE POOR LITTLE BOY.

---

I SAW just now a little boy  
Go limping down a narrow street;  
His clothes were wet and ragged too,  
He had no shoes upon his feet.

His feet were red and blue with cold,  
He look'd at me so sad and grave;  
And as he pass'd he seem'd to say,  
Oh! what a happy home you have!

His hair was rough, his cheeks were pale,—  
I wonder where his home can be;  
And if he has a mother there  
To take him kindly on her knee.

I wonder if he has a bed,  
And where he went this stormy day;  
If he has milk, and meat, and bread,  
And books to read and toys for play.

I've read of little orphan boys  
Who had no home but in the street;  
And begg'd about from door to door  
For bits of broken bread and meat.

Who slept on straw, alone and sad,  
With hunger pinch'd and full of pain;  
Oh! I do wish that little boy  
Would come along the street again.

I'd take him gently by the hand,  
And speak as mother speaks to me;  
So sweetly kind, poor little boy!  
I wonder where his home can be.

I should not like such clothes to wear,  
To limp along with naked feet;  
I should not like such tangled hair,  
Nor home in that dark dirty street.

How many pleasant things I have!  
I never thought of that before;  
I will not keep them all myself,  
But give some of them to the poor.

Like Jesus Christ—who could not bear  
That we should not to heaven come;  
He wish'd so much that we should share  
The pleasures of his glorious home.

If I can act like Jesus Christ,  
I know I shall be always right;  
If I could find that little boy,  
I'd give him all my tea to-night.

THE COMMON.

---

ON a wide and open common,  
Where untended cattle stray—  
Where the broom, with golden blossom,  
Scents the breezes far away ;  
Where the asphodel and heather  
Mingle in the dark morass,  
With the snowy silken feather  
Of the waving cotton-grass.

Where the white flower of Parnassus,  
And the sundew's glistening eye,  
Grow beside the lordly bulrush,  
And the sedge-grass waving high ;  
Where the shy and wily plover  
Hides with care her lowly nest ;  
And the wild-bees hum and hover  
Lightly o'er the flowers at rest.

Where the pathways all are narrow,  
Track'd by sheep at shepherd's call,  
Highways to the rabbits' burrow,  
Little paths for creatures small,  
Twisting, turning, in and out,  
Under heather, bush, and brake,  
Zigzag windings cross'd about,  
Like the speckles on a snake.

Here, remote from town or village,  
On the common, bare and wild,  
In a solitary cottage  
Lived a widow with her child ;  
Old and crazy was the dwelling,  
Patch'd and marr'd with streak and stain,  
And the moss-grown thatch was telling  
Tales of winter storm and rain.

Travellers on the distant highway,  
Passing to the market-town,  
Pointed out a lofty fir-tree,  
Which for ages there had grown  
Ever green through spring and winter,  
Roughly bark'd, and rudely bent,  
Stretching out its arms of shelter  
O'er the ruin'd tenement.

Ever whispering, sobbing, sighing,  
In a language little known ;  
Sometimes like an army flying,  
Sometimes like a passing groan,  
Roaring with the winter gale,  
Falling as the tempest fell ;  
Like a mourner's lowly wail,  
Or the ocean's angry swell.

Here the widow lived from childhood—  
She had grown beneath its shade,  
And she thought its music sweeter  
Than the sweetest serenade ;

And she marvell'd when a stranger  
Thought she must be lonesome there;  
All the creatures on the common  
Were like neighbours unto her.

When her Willie's work was ended,  
And the day was nearly done,  
They would roam about the common,  
Looking at the setting sun;  
Looking at the clouds afar,  
And the falling shades of night;  
At the glow-worm's little star,  
And the stars in heaven's height.

They would stand and breathe the perfume  
Floating on the balmy air;  
Thinking how the poor in cities  
Would enjoy a dwelling there.  
They would listen to the silence  
Till the tears were in their eyes;  
And their hearts, with lowly reverence,  
Sought their Father in the skies.

"Oh, my Willie!" said the mother,  
"What a happy home have we;  
Thankful peace, and sweet contentment  
Dwell with us beneath our tree.  
In the city, there are quarrels,  
Swearing, stealing, care, and want,  
Drunken husbands, wretched women,  
Children disobedient.

"When the mother rises early,  
In her close and dismal room,  
She sees nothing of the glory  
Gilding all our yellow broom ;  
She knows nothing of the sweetness  
In the air at early dawn ;  
She has not her spirit brighten'd  
By the music of the morn.

"I would rather hear the skylark,  
And the lapwing's lonely cry,  
Than the grandest music playing  
To a noble company.  
I would rather see the moonlight,  
And the stars all looking down,  
Than the flaring gas, and lamplight  
Of the black and noisy town.

"All things here are well contented,  
All are rich, and none are poor ;  
Every creature, uncomplaining,  
Takes its food at heaven's door.  
All are busy, all are cheerful,  
Minding laws they never break ;  
And their hearts are never careful,  
Whatsoe'er they undertake.

"Heard you, now, the mother calling  
To her lambkin far away ?  
Did that little creature ever  
Think that it would disobey ?



Did the rabbits' merry party,  
Frisking on the dewy heath,  
Ever slight their mother's caution,  
When she bade them hide beneath?

"Did we ever find a nestling,  
And the parent birds were flown?  
Did we ever know the wild-duck  
Left to rear her young alone?  
Oh, my Willie! men may, heedless,  
Pass them by, with scornful eyes;  
God has placed them here, to teach us,  
That we also may be wise.

"He, who made them is our Father,  
All their sense by Him is given;  
And he minds the little sparrow,  
Even from his throne in heaven.  
'Tis a hateful sin to crush them,  
Or to harm in any way;  
Cruel men are wicked, Willie,  
Let the world say what it may.

"He's a coward—trust him never—  
Who will cause a needless smart;  
'Tis the great and manly spirit  
That will own the tender heart.  
Let us love God's harmless creatures.  
Oh! what love to us is given;  
We shall never know its fulness  
Till we meet our Lord in heaven."

THE WORKING WOMAN'S APPEAL

---

AMONGST the hard and cutting things  
Poor women have to feel,  
When poverty is serving out  
Their lean and hungry meal,  
Is the unthinking ignorance  
Of some we call genteel.

I would not wish to name the thing,  
To give the least offence;  
But folks like these appear to me  
To lose a certain sense,  
And quite forget that, just like *theirs*,  
Are working-people's pence.

*Our* shilling seems to them so big,  
It surely must be able  
To furnish luxuries, as well  
As comforts, for our table ;  
And what ten shillings ought to do,  
That, really, is a fable !

When I was young, and did not think  
How fast the money ran,  
But spent my wages as they came,  
Without a thought or plan,  
I was the upper housemaid to  
The young Squire Goldiman.

They kept a famous table then,  
And never thought to spare—  
They always had fine company  
And hospitable fare;  
And nothing was for them too good,  
Magnificent, or rare.

'Tis not for me to give a guess ;  
I could not guess at all,  
How much was spent in luxury  
At that old manor hall—  
But I should think a thousand pounds  
Would never cover all.

And so they went on, year by year :  
They used the servants well,  
Though many tales of shameful waste  
'Tis certain I could tell ;  
The mistress never came to see,  
She only rang the bell.

- And then the lady's-maid went in,  
So dressy and so gay ;  
Or nurse-maid, with the children, came  
To bid mamma good-day ;  
Or stately-looking housekeeper  
Her orders took away.

The servants' hall, without control,  
Without advice or care,  
Was not the very best of schools  
A woman to prepare  
To marry in her proper rank,  
With only poor man's fare.

I lived at Squire Goldiman's  
Three years, and something more,  
And, when I left the fine old hall,  
My heart felt rather sore ;  
But, thinking of a married life,  
I got my trouble o'er.

My mistress told the servant John,  
Who told me in a trice,  
That she had wish'd to see me first,  
To give me some advice,  
Before I left my service there,  
To face a world of vice.

She hoped I never should forget  
The mercies I had there,  
The reading of the Bible,  
And the use of daily prayer ;  
And the service on the Sabbath-day,  
With all the servants there.

She hoped I should be serious,  
And have my spirit bent  
To use my talents faithfully,  
As they were only lent,  
And never, on the least pretext,  
To yield to discontent.

"You say your husband's wages are  
Ten shillings, if not more ;  
Well, if you're not extravagant,  
You'll not be very poor ;  
But you must always strive to keep  
A little sum in store."

And so I left the Manor Hall  
To try my luck in life—  
It seemed to me a charming thing  
To be a married wife—  
It is since then I've learn'd about  
The struggle and the strife.  
The house in which I went to live  
Was in a narrow street ;  
I tried to do my very best  
To have it always neat—  
But, I had lived at Goldiman's,  
Where all was so complete.  
Oh ! then I never thought at all  
How much it cost for tea ;  
For, always in the servants' hall  
We had the best Bohea,  
And put in sugar to our taste,  
A handsome quantity.  
We always had good beer to drink  
Within the servants' hall,  
The butler and the lady's-maid  
Would never touch it *small* ;  
And as to drinking water—*that*  
They would not drink at all.  
Of course, there never was a thought  
Of any want of meat ;  
We always had as much of that  
As ever we could eat,  
And sometimes made a pretty fuss,  
And said it was not sweet.

Of course, within the servants' hall  
We had a famous fire ;  
We never thought about the coals—  
Our master was the buyer ;  
And so we piled it merrily,  
Just to our hearts' desire.  
And as to light, we never thought  
Of such a thing to spare ;  
We let the candle stand to burn,  
Or let it stand to flare—  
No matter if 'twere used or not,  
By any body there.  
Oh, deary me ! the soap we used  
At Squire Goldiman's !  
The suds flow'd over all the tubs,  
And over all the pans—  
To think of saving soap at all,  
Was not amongst our plans.  
It need not be a mystery, then,  
If any one would try  
To calculate the wants of e'en  
The poorest family,  
That, in my alter'd circumstance,  
I now and then should sigh.  
I know it may, and has been said,  
I'd but myself to blame ;  
I might have lived a single life,  
And not have changed my name.  
Well—I may have my thoughts of that,  
My betters do the same.

Besides, I've heard when gentlemen  
Have lost a fine estate,  
And bore the loss right manfully,  
That people call'd *them* great—  
Whoever cheer'd with word like that  
A working woman's fate?

Yet we are great as well as they,  
I know it, and will speak,  
Although we're only working folks,  
And women poor and weak;  
And though at times we cannot check  
The tears upon our cheek.

I know it needs a noble heart,  
A spirit true and just,  
To want a hundred little things,  
Yet never go on trust;  
And keep a hope alive within,  
And never let it rust.

I know it needs a strength of love,  
With nought of selfishness,  
To eke the little victuals out,  
That all may have a mess,  
And hardly touch a bit yourself,  
Though faint with weariness.

I know it needs a courage stout,  
A right and ready will,  
To twist and turn the clothes about,  
And darn, and darn them still;  
Not knowing where to get a bit  
Another hole to fill.

I know it needs the patience  
That a martyr may require,  
To wash without a copper,  
With a pot upon the fire ;  
The chimney smoke all driving down,  
And smuts as black as mire.  
Then, not to have a garden !  
Not the smallest of the small,  
Where one could stretch a line across  
To meet your neighbour's wall ;  
But forced to dry before the fire,  
In smoke, and steam, and all.  
And then, when you are fit to drop,  
Your spirits almost beat,  
The children squalling on the floor,  
The baby got to fret ;  
Your husband coming in, perhaps  
With clothes all wringing wet.  
And next may follow hasty words,  
As if you'd been in bed,  
When what you want is tenderness,  
And praises in the stead ;  
Oh ! it well may break a woman's heart,  
And nearly craze her head.  
I was in this condition once,  
When Mistress Goldiman  
Came in her carriage just to see  
Her humble servant, Anne ;  
My word ! I cannot tell you how  
My blood both leapt and ran.



Her face was like an apple-bloom,  
Her eyes like bits of sky;  
Her shotten silk of pink and green,  
She lifted daintily;  
And held her head up like a queen,  
So mighty grand and high.  
Her little bonnet, made of lace,  
Displayed her golden hair;  
The flowers look'd all so natural,  
They might have blossom'd there.  
Oh, deary me! she could not sit  
Upon my smutty chair.  
She only knew of cottages  
That poets write about;  
Where work is pleasant exercise  
Both in the house and out,  
And children all have curling hair  
Like cherubim, no doubt.  
Mine never could come up to that,  
However much I tried,  
And on a washing-day, of course,  
The tub, one could not hide;—  
We had no lean-to at the back,  
Nor any room beside.  
She cast a freezing look around,  
Reproach was in her tone;  
She lectured me on many things  
She said I should have done;  
And many other things, she said,  
I should have let alone.

She hoped the children went to school,  
And always kept to church;  
She should herself inquiry make  
Of honest Mr. Birch;  
And then she look'd as though she'd brought  
A warrant for a search.

She felt herself quite mortified  
To find me in this way,  
She could not understand the things  
That working people say;  
She could not sympathize at all,  
And so she went away.

And I, who really do believe  
That women, weak and poor,  
Who, with ten shillings in the week,  
Keep debts outside the door,  
Are high and noble-hearted, then,  
Felt spiritless and sore.

It is not always one can laugh,  
And turn it into joke,  
When people teach you how to draw,  
Who never tried the yoke;  
But think they have a right to scold  
Us, stupid labouring folk.

The worst revenge that I would take,  
The only one I'd seek,  
Would be, that Mistress Goldiman  
Should manage here a week;  
And after that experience,  
I'd like to hear her speak.

But still I often blame myself,  
When I reflect again,  
How wastefully we used the things  
Of Squire Goldiman ;  
I wish I had a quarter now,  
Of what I wasted then.

As I get opportunity,  
I'll speak to girls in place,  
And tell them what a shame it is,  
And what a great disgrace—  
But, deary me! the servants now,  
Wont hearken to your case.

MRS. GODLIMAN.

---

"WHEN I was just about fifteen,  
And seeking for a place ;  
My constitution rather weak,  
And not a pretty face,  
(Though of an honest family,  
Whose name had no disgrace;)

"I heard at young Squire Godliman's  
There was a chance for me ;  
So I put on my Sunday clothes,  
And quickly went to see ;  
My mother she walk'd all the way,  
To bear me company.

"I felt so flutter'd in myself  
For fear I should not speak,  
That all the blood rush'd from my heart  
To burn upon my cheek ;  
And then I turn'd so faint again,  
I might have walk'd a week.

"But when I'd fairly pull'd the bell,  
And heard the ringing sound,  
I really thought I should have sunk  
Upon the very ground ;  
My heart beat quick against my side,  
My head felt swimming round.

"A pleasant-looking servant-maid  
Came quickly to the door;  
I told her what I came about,  
As well as I had power—  
'Well, sit down here and rest,' she said,  
'Till parlour lunch is o'er.'

"I sat down by the kitchen fire,  
And could do nought but stare  
At all the quantity of things  
The cook had ranged up there;  
And all as neat and nice as wax,  
So orderly, and fair.

"But soon there came another maid,  
I thought they call'd her Grace;  
A kind and cheerful voice she had,  
And such a happy face!  
'And so you wish to try,' she said,  
'The under housemaid's place?'

"'Well, come along with me, my dear,  
Mistress will see you now;'  
And I went with her through the hall,  
I cannot tell you how;  
But every step I felt my face  
Still hot and hotter grow.

"When she had shown me in the room,  
She gently closed the door,  
And it was Mrs. Godliman,  
Whom then I stood before;  
But when I saw her lovely face,  
I never trembled more.

"It was a mystery to me then,  
And now, it is not clear,  
That in a moment I should lose  
All fluttering and fear ;  
I must have thought that she would look  
Suspicious or severe.

"I've heard folks say—(I'm sure I hope  
That they may be forgiven)—  
That not a feature of her face  
Was beautiful or even ;  
If they weren't beautiful for earth,  
I'm sure they were for heaven.

"She spoke as if herself was made  
Of common flesh and blood ;  
And though she such a lady was,  
My feelings understood,  
And trusted me, that I should be,  
Both honest, true, and good.

"I felt the power of goodness come  
As she sat talking there ;  
She seem'd to make all goodness look  
So beautiful and fair ;  
I really felt to hate the things  
She said she could not bear.

"'You are in mourning, child,' she said ;  
'Whom have you lost, my dear ?  
I've lost a little darling child—  
We've both had grief to bear.'  
I felt that moment I could give  
My life away for her.

"I'd lost my father, that was why  
I must a service take,  
And we had had distress enough  
Our very hearts to break !  
But she seem'd more to take to me,  
E'en for my trouble's sake.  
" 'You are not strong,' she said again,  
'It may have been from want !  
When sickness came, and poverty,  
Your comforts were but scant ;  
A little better living here  
Will alter that complaint.'  
" And she engaged me then and there,  
She said she'd no mistrust  
I should abuse her confidence,  
Or violate my trust ;  
And, after she had spoken so,  
I would have perish'd first.  
" It was ten years I lived with her,—  
She died upon my breast ;  
If ever saint was fit to dwell  
In God's eternal rest,  
It was my angel mistress then,  
Who join'd the good, and blest.  
" Oh ! such a mourning as that was !  
The very light of day  
We seem'd to bury in the earth  
With that dear lady's clay ;  
Tears, fell like rain about the grave,  
And also far away.

"I often wish I could recall  
The very words she said ;  
So full of wisdom and of love,  
They seem'd like daily bread ;  
And many a weak and weary soul  
With comfort they have fed.

"But, then, 'twas not her words alone,  
It was her actions spoke ;  
I've seen the stout rebellious will  
Before her sweetness broke ;  
And anger seem'd to melt away  
Like snow, upon a brook.

"The ladies never look'd at her  
For fashions in the place ;  
She never set the fashion there,  
In any thing but grace—  
But how could all the fashions mend  
That dear and lovely face ?

"The servants seem'd to catch her taste,  
And dress'd in neat attire ;  
Poor finery ran all to waste,  
With no one to admire—  
I've really seen a young girl cast  
Her flowers in the fire.

"The wheel of life ran smoothly on,  
As if 'twere daily oil'd ;  
She was the oil that kept it smooth,  
And all the friction foil'd,  
That in so many families  
Has peace and beauty spoil'd.



"Amongst the poor she was adored,  
Yet not for money's worth;  
Her presence seem'd to make their homes  
A heaven upon earth—

For sweet encouragement she gave,  
And hopes of heavenly birth.

"She never took the teacher's place,  
Nor made herself more wise;  
But praised their struggles and success,  
And gave her sympathies,  
Until they felt within themselves  
Capacity to rise.

"And so, a fine ambition grew  
To be what she approved,  
And thus she drew them happily  
To Jesus, whom she loved;  
And she had more humility  
Than any she reproved.

"Ah, well! she has behind her left  
A path into the sky,  
That shines with love and holiness,  
And purest charity;  
And we must follow in that path  
If we would mount as high.

"I do remember once, I saw  
Those soft and loving eyes  
Flash out with indignation  
And sorrowful surprise—  
I would not for the world have had  
Them fix'd on me that wise.

"It happen'd thus—I know it well—  
'Twas on a Christmas-day,  
When all the house was full of friends,  
And every body gay,—  
An orphan boy who came to beg,  
Was huff'd, and sent away.

"She always held that Christmas-day  
Was made for happiness ;  
For showering bounties on the poor,  
Or any in distress—  
That 'twas a day that preach'd to all  
To cease from selfishness.

"The man who sent the child away,  
Had quickly off to pack,  
Through drifting snow, and pelting sleet,  
To fetch the young one back,  
If haply he should have the luck  
To follow on his track.

"A parson, or archbishop, might  
Have learn'd from her that day  
To take a text on charity,  
And also what to say—  
To fix a lesson on the mind  
That would not pass away.

"She set the shivering urchin down  
Before the kitchen fire,  
She cut him beef, and pudding too,  
As if he'd been the squire ;  
Then shod his feet, and clothed him well  
With all he could require.

"She did it with such tenderness

As if she'd been his mother!

As if some time she'd had herself

A little starving brother—

Ah, lack-a-day! when shall we see

Her likeness in another?

"And then so meek she turn'd to us,

Who all were standing by;

"'Twas not our worth," she said, "that brought

Our Saviour from the sky;

It was our hopeless misery,

Our helpless poverty.

"'He did not stop to ask our sin,

Our station, or our name;

He saw that we were perishing,

And from His glory came;

And let us, in our humble way,

All try to do the same.'

"That sermon never was forgot

Within the servants' hall;

The man who sent the child away

Was most upset of all—

I saw the tears run down his face,

And on his coat-sleeve fall.

"Well, well—her works will follow her

Above this setting sun,

And many will come forth to tell

The good that she has done;

And yet she was not very old—

She was but forty-one."

A RELIGIOUS WOMAN.

---

'Twas early morn in the early spring,  
But Peggy was moving about,  
Preparing to leave her dwelling all right,  
As she had engaged to be out.

The table was spread for her simple meal,  
The kettle sung loud and high ;  
But, as she look'd over the window-blind,  
She said, with a thoughtful sigh—

“There's Martha Low's husband is just gone past,  
And left her alone—poor heart !  
I cannot think what that woman will do  
If nobody takes her part.

“No doubt she has worn and worried him out,  
And none of her family come ;  
She never has taken much trouble, I doubt,  
To make them a happy home.

“And a mischievous neighbour she is, indeed,  
That I can never deny ;  
For many a mean ungenerous thing  
I've suffer'd in days gone by.

“But what is the good of thinking of that,  
Now she is so weak and low ?  
She has it paid back in trouble enough,  
That I should not like, I know.

"Poor soul ! she has no one to make her bed,  
Nor to give her a bit nor sup ;  
Nor to kindle her fire, nor lend her a hand,  
If she would be getting up.

"I am sure 'tis enough to make her complain,  
To have such a wretched home ;  
I could not endure it, I know, myself,  
To live in a dirty room."

The tea it was hot in the bright teapot,  
And, oh ! it was smelling so good,  
And holding it up in her hand awhile,  
'Twas thus she reasoning stood—

"There's no use in thinking of times gone by,  
But try to forgive and forget ;  
Please God she recover this illness now,  
She may be neighbourly yet.

But whether or not—what's that to me ?  
My duty is all the same ;  
If I pay her back in her surly ways,  
Why, I shall be much to blame."

So Peggy, she took down one of the cups  
That stood on the cupboard shelf,  
And wiping the dust with her apron, said,  
"'Tis tea I should like myself."

The beautiful tea ! and she pour'd it out,  
And sugar was not forgot ;  
Then toasting a slice of her home-made bread,  
She butter'd it nice and hot.

She peep'd from the window, and down the street,  
Nobody was going by,  
So, slipping away to her neighbour's door,  
She open'd it silently.

And, oh ! what a desolate room it was !  
All comfort had left the place ;  
The poor woman lay as white as a sheet,  
With a frown upon her face.

The cinders were cold in the rusty grate,  
As if they had never burn'd ;  
The poker and tongs had fallen about,  
The fender was overturn'd.

And pewter pots on the table stood,  
In circles of porter stain ;  
And tobacco-ashes, and broken pipes,  
For days might there have lain.

And ragged old bits of carpet and mat  
Were kick'd up here and there ;  
A medicine bottle and broken mug  
Were standing upon a chair.

The chamber was close, and the sheets were black,  
The bed was tumbled and toss'd,  
And look'd as if never a neighbour's foot  
Had over the threshold cross'd.

It look'd as if pity and peace had flown  
From the comfortless place away,  
And left the woman to suffer alone,  
Still weaker from day to day.

Good Peggy, she cast a pitying eye  
On Martha's sorrowful case ;  
And, moving about with a quiet step,  
She tidied the dirty place.

She kindled a fire, she swept the hearth,  
And made an orderly shelf ;  
And thought, as she laid the carpeting straight,  
I hate a muddle myself.

The woman observed her neighbour at work,  
But never a word she said ;  
But sullenly turn'd her body about,  
And sullenly turn'd her head.

But Peggy was not in the least dismay'd,  
'Twas pity that fill'd her heart ;  
And all her concern was how to perform  
A generous neighbour's part.

She drew up the table close to the bed,  
She set the tea thereon ;  
And then it was time, by the early chime,  
For Peggy herself to be gone.

She nodded to Martha, and closed the door,  
But never a smile had she ;  
Yet, not for that did she grudge her time,  
Nor yet the toast and tea.

"It wasn't for thanks that I went," she said,  
As she set her pot on the hob ;  
"It was for no manner of good to myself  
That I did the little job.

"And yet, in some way, I feel as if I  
Had had a reward in view ;  
My breakfast is just as welcome again,  
Now Martha has got some too.

"Those were pretty words my Emily learnt  
One day at the Sunday school,  
About loving your neighbour as well as yourself—  
They said 'twas the Golden Rule."

Now Peggy, that day, would wash at the Hall,  
With two or three women beside ;  
And, rubbing or rincing, the chatter went on,  
A constantly flowing tide.

"Mistress Peggy," said one, as she rung out the clothes,  
Just tinged in delicate blue,  
"Your neighbour has said some scandalous things  
About your husband and you."

"I know it," said Peggy, "but never mind that,  
The truth she may some day learn ;  
There's no use in playing at tit for tat,  
Nor evil for evil return."

"Well, I never heard such a woman as you !  
There's nothing that she would not say  
To hinder your getting a good day's work,  
Or to slander your name away."

"I know it," said Peggy ; "I know it, poor soul !  
Her malice she does not hide ;  
But we've enough victuals to eat, thank God !  
And a little to spare beside."



It never was part of Peggy Hall's plan  
To gossip to every one ;  
For even her left hand never could tell  
The good which the right had done.

"They say, her husband is always in drink,  
And makes her dwelling a sty ;  
And then her family never come near—  
That's what she has earn'd, says I.

"She always was scolding and storm'd about,  
No comfort they ever knew ;  
And now she is left to shift for herself—  
I say, she has got her due."

"You may be right," said Peggy, and took  
Some soap from off the shelf ;  
"But sure, Mrs. Sharp, you never would like  
To be in that state yourself."

"Why, no, to be sure, that's certainly true,  
But mine is a different case ;  
I do all I can for my neighbours, I know,  
And keep up a cheerful face."

Now, Peggy had never been given to preach,  
She wasn't a woman of words ;  
So went with the linen away to the bleach,  
And hung it up on the cords.

She pegg'd up the sheets on the curving lines,  
And look'd to the clouds and wind,  
When thoughts of her neighbour's dirty old sheet  
Came flashing across her mind.

"Poor Martha!" she said, and she heaved a sigh,

"I'll try it to-night, I will—

Clean linen is one of the pleasantest things

When people are sick and ill.

"I'll carry the sheet that I always keep

In case of a sudden need,

And put it on there instead of the one

That's laying upon her bed.

"I'll wash out her own in the early morn,

And hang it up out of view ;

And, if it is dry when my work is done,

I'll wash out the other, too."

And so, on these neighbourly thoughts intent,

She rubb'd and she rinsed away,

Till the copper was dry, and the tubs put by,

And they finish'd the washing-day.

And Peggy is now on her homeward path,—

Her step has a joyful spring ;

The love of her God is filling her heart,

She's half inclined to sing.

O pitiful love! and charity kind!

Ye are the sweetest flowers

That ever were strewn, by God's own hand,

To gladden this world of ours.

Her finger is now on her neighbour's latch,

Her heart is up to God ;

The tea and the toast had vanish'd away,

And Martha, she gives a nod.

And that was the most that happen'd that night,  
But Peggy, she got her ways ;  
"She's easier now in her bed, poor soul !"  
That pleased her more than praise.

You could not describe, if you tried your best,  
The clever devices she had ;  
But woman's quick wit is never at fault  
When she would make others glad.

It was not a day, it was not a week,  
Nor months, you well may say,  
That Peggy's long-suffering had to endure—  
Bad tempers don't change in a day.

But Peggy could feel, and she could forgive,  
And ever was slow to blame ;  
"Poor soul ! if I had a temper like hers,  
I'm sure I should be the same.

"Thank God, that he has bestow'd upon me  
A temper not apt to fire ;  
But I have no warrant to boast about that,  
For I am no better than her.

"But she will come round, I fancy myself,  
I'm certain almost she will ;  
One cannot expect good temper to grow,  
Whilst a woman is weak and ill."

And thus she went on for many a day,  
And strove with all her might,  
To bear with her neighbour's fretful ways,  
Who never took things right.

"'Tis not for the value of thanks, at all,"  
She said to herself apart;  
"But 'tis for the sake of her precious soul,  
Please God would change her heart."

She was not content with a powerless wish—  
But pray'd that her God would take  
Compassion upon that ignorant soul.  
For the merciful Saviour's sake.

And Time flew by, on those wonderful wings  
That never turn back again;  
And some he bore to their final rest,  
And some he heal'd of pain.

And spring had pass'd by, and summer had flown,  
It was on a Sabbath eve,  
And Martha sat then by her open door,  
For that she could now achieve.

The bells rung out for the evening prayer,  
And people throng'd the street;  
"I wish I could join once more," she said,  
"My prayers with those who meet.

"Oh! how I wish I could sing in the church  
The hymns that once I knew,  
And join again in the solemn praise,  
And in the confession too.

"I used to consider religion a plague,  
Or only a false pretence;  
And if people preach'd a sermon to me,  
I used to take great offence.

" But now, I am sure, 'tis a beautiful thing,  
And not a pretence at all ;  
If all the religious people were like  
My neighbour, good Peggy Hall

" I used to believe it was only for talk,  
(That certainly is a fact ;)   
But dear Peggy Hall never talk'd at all—  
With her it was all an act.

" And if she had not been an angel quite  
She would not have borne with me ;  
For a more dissatisfied, heathenish wretch  
I know there never could be.

" I could not endure to see her come in  
With that sweet pitiful face ;  
I wish'd she would leave me to perish alone,  
And never come nigh my place.

" I knew how shamefully I had contrived  
To blacken her spotless name ;  
And then to be help'd at every turn,  
I hardly could bear the shame.

" If patience could fail or be wearied out,  
Hers certainly would have flown ;  
But my sharp words never anger'd her more.  
Than if she had been a stone.

" She only appear'd more tenderly kind,  
And fear'd I was not so well ;  
She seem'd to me just fit for the sky,  
And I seem'd fit for hell.

“ And when she sat down and read me a psalm,  
Her voice was so full of love ;  
I knew she would go to the blessed God,  
And sing with the saints above.

“ Oh, yes ! and she will, if the Bible is true,  
And that I never can doubt ;  
For she is the woman that’s doing the things  
That others are talking about.

“ God bless her ! I say, for a better friend  
On earth there never did live ;  
And may she never come short of the help  
That she is so ready to give.”

THE YOUNG ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.

---

WE have the King in royal state,  
The Bishop in his stall,  
The Peer within his castle gate,  
The Duke in princely hall.

• We have the Squire of high degree,  
The Poet of renown ;  
The Admiral who rules the sea,  
The Judge in flowing gown.

But I have seen another man,  
A man who pleased me more—  
A little English Gentleman  
Within a cottage door.

His step was light, his eyes were bright,  
He was but twelve years old ;  
But he had strength that put to flight  
The braggart and the bold.

His soul was full of honour true,  
His heart with kindness warm ;  
His form was strong and active, too,  
And ready was his arm.

He made his mother's heart to sing:  
It was his great delight  
To please her well in every thing,  
And help her morn and night.

If she were ill he loved her more,  
He watch'd her weary look ;  
He lit the fire, he swept the floor,  
He did his best to cook.

So gentle were his words and ways,  
His habits were so clean ;  
He was an English Gentleman  
As true as e'er was seen.

He scorn'd to teaze a little boy,  
He scorn'd to cheat at play ;  
He scorn'd his knowledge to employ  
To lead the weak astray.

If he was going any where,  
And saw a child oppress'd,  
He took its part with all his heart,  
And got its wrongs redress'd.

He did not stand to gape and stare  
At ladies in the street ;  
But raised his cap respectfully,  
And gave them honour meet.

He listen'd when an aged man  
His words of wisdom spoke ;  
He never laugh'd behind his back,  
Nor turn'd him into joke.

He would not stoop to tell a lie,  
He would not swear at all ;  
Nor jostle past you in the street,  
Nor drive you 'gainst a wall.



He would not roughly shut a door  
Or gate before your face ;  
To be uncouth to rich or poor  
He reckon'd a disgrace.

If he were standing in the street,  
Or stopp'd with boys at play,  
And heard them wicked words repeat,  
He left and went away.

He would not learn their vulgar ways,  
Nor imitate their plan ;  
He heeded not their blame or praise—  
He was a gentleman.

He ne'er was seen to teaze a cat,  
Nor set a dog to fight,  
Nor beat down insects with his hat—  
That was not his delight.

But he would sometimes share his meal  
With poorer boys than he ;  
He had a noble heart to feel  
And do a charity.

If we had gentlemen like these  
Amongst the rich and poor,  
We need not fear what enemies  
Would land upon our shore.

If Britons all were resolute  
To be both good and true,  
Our country would be prosperous,  
With work for all to do.

There would not be the poor man then,  
Without his food and fire ;  
There would not be the wealthy man,  
Without his heart's desire.

For God would bless our country,  
And guide it with his hand,  
And give us great prosperity,  
And plenty in our land.

Let every youthful Briton, then,  
Exert both heart and hand  
To be a Christian Gentleman,  
The glory of our land.

### THE PRIMROSE GATHERERS.

---

COME ! Mary and Jane, and Johnny and Joe,  
 Let us all to the copse in the high wood go ;  
 The primroses now are in blossom I know,  
 And the pretty anemones white as the snow.

Now, take hold of hands as we run down the lane,  
 And just in the middle we'll put little Jane ;  
 She's smaller than we are, and isn't so strong,  
 But, safe in the middle, we'll skip her along.

Don't you smell something sweet here ? I'm sure that I can ;  
 There used to be violets grow in this lane.  
 Oh ! here I have one, how it cover'd its head,  
 But I spied it out in its snug little bed.

Look ! now there are plenty, all blue in the grass,  
 We'll each make a bunch just to put in a glass ;  
 I'll make one for mother, she thinks them so sweet,  
 And, Jane, you can make one for little Rose Fleet.

Ah, poor little Rose ! the doctor has said  
 In a very few months that she will be dead ;  
 So take her, dear Jenny, a nice bunch of flowers,  
 They'll be pretty to look at in wearisome hours.

See ! there's a fine butterfly, yellow as gold,  
 They never come out when 'tis rainy and cold ;  
 They would spoil all their beautiful colours, they say,  
 And so they keep house till a sunshiny day.

Let us sit down and listen ! I never did hear  
Such a number of voices, all singing so clear ;  
There's the thrush and the blackbird—I like them the best,  
Except, in the winter, the little redbreast.

And there's Mr. Cuckoo—he's always the same—  
He never seems tired of telling his name ;  
And there is the skylark, high up in the skies,  
I cannot look at him—it dazzles my eyes.

And there goes the rook, with his fine glossy coat,  
For ever repeating his rookery note ;  
I could sit here and listen the whole summer long—  
Every bush in the thicket is merry with song.

Ah ! what have you got, Johnny Jones ? let us see—  
A little bird dropp'd from its nest in the tree !  
How it shivers and flutters, and opens its beak !  
And looks all about it, as if it would speak !

It wants to be put in its warm nest again—  
Do climb the tree, Johnny, and try if you can.  
Ah ! you've got it safe there ; now, quick, run away—  
It was a good thing that we came here to-day.

It soon would have died at the foot of the tree ;  
How merry and happy its mother will be !  
But here are the primroses—oh ! look, how gay ;  
Now gather, and gather, and gather away.

BOY GOING TO SERVICE

---

"You've got a service now, John,  
To-morrow you'll be gone;  
So listen to your mother, child,  
Whilst here we sit alone.

"We've brought you up so far, John,  
And you've been good and true;  
And we've been always proud to say  
There was no boy like you.

"Your father, all the country round,  
Has had an honest name;  
And I, although I would not boast,  
Have always had the same.

"Now, Johnny, mind your master,  
Whatever he may say;  
A servant's duty always is  
To listen and obey.

"If you are trusted with his goods,  
Oh, Johnny! have a care;  
The goods are his—he trusted you—  
To touch them never dare.

"They may be great, they may be small,  
But still, the smallest bring;  
He that will take a pin, they say,  
Will take a bigger thing.

"Don't stop to play at marbles, dear,  
Nor loiter in the street ;  
Your time is all your master's now,  
To waste it is to cheat.

"But let him trust you, like a man,  
You'd like to hear him say—  
'Johnny will do his duty well  
Though I may be away.'

"And never tell a lie, my boy,  
Whatever may befall ;  
But tell the truth out manfully—  
My Johnny, tell it all.

"It may bring trouble at the first,  
But always bear the blame ;  
'Tis better to have punishment  
Than thoughts of sin and shame.

"And there is God in heaven, John,  
Who sees you every day ;  
Don't be ashamed, but go to Him,  
And every morning pray.

"He knows what you may have to bear,  
And what temptations meet ;  
And you can speak to Him in prayer,  
At home, or in the street.

"He'll be your friend, my little boy,  
A better friend than I ;  
For there is nothing hard to Him,  
And he is always nigh.

“ And don't think 'tis a trouble, John,  
To tell Him if you're sad ;  
For He is very pitiful,  
And soon can make you glad.

“ And He has been your parents' friend  
Till now we both are grey ;  
He will be yours, my dearest child,  
I'll ask him every day.”

THE DRUNKARD'S WIFE

---

"OH, Edward! do not laugh, I pray,  
To see that drunken man;  
I'll tell you what I've seen to-day,  
And then you hardly can.

"Our servant Jane learnt in the town—  
I cannot tell you how—  
That some one had been starved to death  
In little Wapping Row.

"And so I stored my basket well,  
And went out there to see,  
And found it was the truth indeed—  
A dreadful history.

"I pass'd through many dismal courts,  
Through lanes and alleys low,  
Before I found the wretched house  
I sought in Wapping Row.

"High up a dark and winding stair,  
From floor to floor I went,  
And heard sometimes a woman swear,  
Or beaten child lament.

"Upon the topmost flight I found  
A close and wretched room;  
Alas! that any human soul  
Should call such place a home.



"No fire was burning in the grate,  
The walls were damp and bare,  
The window panes were stuff'd with rags,  
No furniture was there.

"But in a corner, dark and chill,  
Some dirty straw was spread,  
And there a little ghastly child  
Was lying stiff and dead.

"But still there was a moaning sound,  
As if from one in pain ;  
But many times I spoke before  
An answer came again.

"At length a woman slowly moved,  
Roused from unquiet rest ;  
And, wailing with a feeble cry,  
A babe clung to her breast.

"'Twas long before she was revived  
Sufficiently to speak ;  
But then began to tell her tale  
In words so faint and weak—

"I fear'd that I should lose them all ;  
But as she went along,  
Her hollow cheek grew fever flush'd—  
Her words came quick and strong,

"As though she wish'd, but once again,  
Now death was drawing near,  
To pour out all her misery  
Into a woman's ear.

“ ‘I was,’ she said, ‘a farmer’s bride,  
With love and peace content ;  
I was his heart’s delight and pride,  
Fair, young, and innocent.

“ ‘He was an honest, sober man,  
I loved him as my life ;  
And never—I may say it now—  
Was more devoted wife.

“ ‘Our house stood in a bed of flowers—  
I think I see it now,  
With all the roses clustering thick  
Around the window bow.

“ ‘It was a little Paradise,  
And full of happiness ;  
For God’s good angels guarded us,  
And we had no distress.

“ ‘But when my little child was born,  
My cup ran o’er with joy ;  
The days were never long enough  
For all my sweet employ.

“ ‘Her prattling tongue, her pretty ways,  
Were always new delight ;  
And she grew up so strong and well,  
And was so quick and bright.

“ ‘And yet she had a tender heart,  
The least reproof could move ;  
And, oh ! she look’d so earnestly,  
Till certain of my love.

“ ‘And when she flung her little arms  
Close fondling round my neck,  
My foolish heart broke down with joy,  
Sweet tears I could not check.

“ ‘Then came a shadow o’er my life—  
My husband took to drink ;  
And lower down, and lower still,  
My heart began to sink.

“ ‘Still lower down, and lower down,  
We left our pleasant home ;  
And, sinking still from worse to worse,  
To this poor place we’ve come

“ ‘Our little comforts, one by one,  
Were sold away for drink ;  
The pawnshop has our furniture—  
My husband would not think.

“ ‘At last they took away our bed,  
Regardless of my tears ;  
They brought a warrant of distress,  
To seize for rent arrears.

“ ‘The father’s heart was flinty stone ;  
He valued us no more  
Than this damp bed of filthy straw,  
That lies upon the floor.

“ ‘I work’d till all my strength was gone,  
Till this poor boy was born ;  
Since then we’ve pined from day to day,  
More famish’d and forlorn.

“‘But soon ’twill end ; beneath the sod,  
My little girl and I  
Shall find a place of peaceful rest  
From all our misery.

“‘Oh, lady ! did you ever watch  
A rose fade day by day,  
Till all its grace and loveliness  
Were gone and pass’d away ?

“‘So did I watch my little flower  
With anguish and despair ;  
The silken curls that used to shine  
Around her face so fair,

“‘Were matted now, and soil’d with dirt—  
No soap nor fire had we ;  
But, oh ! her cheeks, so deadly pale !  
Look ! lady, you may see.’

“And then she groan’d a heavy groan,  
And, with a ghastly stare,  
She pointed to the little corpse  
That lay so quiet there.

“‘I could not hold her little head,  
As there she moaning lay ;  
We had no light—’twas in the dark  
Her sweet soul pass’d away.

“‘Oh ! I had seen the crimson flush  
Upon her hollow cheek,  
And fever lighting up her eye,  
But ’twas no use to speak.

" ' Her father never thought of her,  
Poor helpless innocent !  
But often down that dismal stair  
Her trembling feet were sent,

" ' On, through the foul and filthy haunts  
Of misery and sin,  
Into the drunkards' palaces,  
To get her father gin.

" ' The piercing cold, and fog so raw,  
Struck to her little heart ;  
Her shivering limbs and chattering teeth  
Oft made the people start.

" ' Her hollow cough would sound at night  
Along the lonely street ;  
But no one ask'd her where she went,  
Nor track'd her naked feet.'

" Again the woman heaved a groan,  
And, with a ghastly stare,  
She look'd upon the little corpse  
That lay so quiet there.

" Her sunken eyes she feebly raised,  
Then faintly bow'd her head ;  
A struggling sigh escaped her lips—  
I saw that she was dead.

" Her wretched, lonely, broken heart  
At last had found its rest ;  
But, wailing still, the baby lay,  
Close clinging to her breast."

THE YOUNG NURSE GIRL.

---

"I'VE watch'd you many years, Katie,  
Since you were quite a child;  
And seen you daily growing up  
Industrious and mild.

"I've seen you nurse your mother's child  
With tenderness and care;  
And noticed your obedience  
And reverence for her.

"On this account, I choose you now  
To nurse my little boy;  
And hope you will be happy, child,  
And love your new employ.

"Come with me to the quiet room  
Where baby lies asleep;  
I'll lift the little coverlid,  
That you may take a peep.

"Look at his softly closing eyes,  
His glowing cheek so bright;  
No tears of grief have wetted them,  
Nor sickness made them white.

"Look at his rosy, open mouth,  
That never spoke a word;  
He never knew the meaning yet  
Of any thing he heard.

"Look at his little helpless feet,  
That cannot stand nor run,  
Nor skip about, nor leap for joy,  
Nor frolic in the sun.

"He's like the closely folded bud  
Upon a sweet rose-tree,  
That only shows a tiny glimpse  
Of what it is to be.

"Bring me that little rose-tree, Kate,  
That's blowing on the stand;  
I'll show you buds and flowers there,  
To make you understand.

"You know how many tender leaves  
Are closely hidden here;  
What sweet perfume, what colours bright,  
Will day by day appear.

"It needs the warm and pleasant sun,  
The soft and gentle air,  
To make this pretty bud unfold  
With all its leaves so fair.

"How beautiful this full-blown flower!  
How brilliant is the hue!  
How perfect each transparent leaf,  
As if this moment new!

"But soon it will begin to fade,  
And fainter every day  
Its colour and its scent will be,  
Till all has pass'd away.

"Now set down *that*, my child, and we  
Will talk of *this* sweet flower,  
Which every day will open more,  
And alter every hour.

"And it will never pass away,  
'Tis made by God to shine,  
With holy angels, in the sky,  
Immortal and divine.

"'Tis made to dwell where all is good,  
And pure, and bright, and true;  
And little Kate I hope will live  
In that bright country, too.

"A baby's mind is like a book  
Where nothing has been writ,  
Where every page is fair and white,  
No soil upon them yet.

"But every day will now turn o'er  
One of those leaves so white;  
And every thing, both seen and heard,  
A secret hand will write.

"If one should say a naughty word,  
The unseen hand would write  
That naughty word upon the leaf,  
That little leaf so white.

"If one should do a wicked thing,  
In earnest or in play,  
An ugly picture would remain  
We could not take away.



"A frowning look, an angry voice,  
Would all be printed there ;  
And stain those leaves so delicate,  
So innocent and fair.

"And day by day, and day by day,  
Dark pictures thus would grow ;  
And words unkind, and angry too,  
The little boy would know.

"And he would recollect them all,  
And soon himself would try  
To say those naughty words again,  
Or even tell a lie.

"For children like to imitate  
What others do and say ;  
They'll even try to swear and steal,  
And soon will learn the way.

"If baby learn'd such naughty words,  
Such wicked ways from you,  
Oh ! think how sorry you would be !  
What would you, Katie, do ?

"Suppose you write upon your slate  
Words from an evil mind,  
And then repent, and wash them out,  
No marks are left behind.

"But never from the human soul  
Can you remove the trace ;  
The thing you write on that to-day,  
You never can efface.

"A man may live a hundred years,  
And roam the world about ;  
But all the way, and all the time,  
May never blot it out.

"But, see ! the little boy's awake,  
We'll talk to him and play ;  
The unseen hand shall print a smile  
Upon the leaf to-day.

"We'll speak to him with soothing words,  
And make him very glad ;  
It is a thing most pitiful  
To see an infant sad.

"And never slap or shake him, Kate,  
Nor speak with peevish tone ;  
Don't snatch him roughly by the hand,  
Nor let him cry alone ;

"For if you do, the little leaf  
Will all be written o'er  
With tales of sorrow and distress,  
That will come out no more.

"And never tell him foolish tales—  
Don't let him hear you say,  
The beggar man will come for him,  
And take him quite away.

"For he will think you speak the truth,  
And will expect to see  
Some frightful creature stealing in,  
To snatch him from your knee.

"No tongue can tell what horrid fears  
Will fill his little heart ;  
He'll be afraid to go to bed,  
The night will make him start.

"I charge you, Katie, never try  
To make him good by fright ;  
For dreadful, dreadful pictures then,  
The unseen hand would write.

"And he would think of them and scream,  
And turn both cold and pale,  
And lose his playful joy of heart,  
From your sad, lying tale.

"But speak the words of truth and love,  
And ever bear in mind,  
That, as the little 'twig is bent,  
The tree will be inclined.'

"God loves to see a little child  
Grow stronger every day ;  
He loves to see its happiness,  
And smiles upon its play.

"And He will notice all you do,  
And write it in his book ;  
He'll notice every gentle word,  
And every patient look.

"But if you teach him naughty words,  
And naughty habits, too ;  
And he grows up a wicked man !  
Oh ! what would Katie do ?"

THE BAD MANAGER.

---

"OH, Fanny! my dear, what a beautiful pie!

I declare that I never did see  
A crust so delicious—and risen so high!  
And baked, as they say, to a T.

"It makes me feel hungry to see it, I own,  
And really it flavours the street;  
That boy smack'd his lips, he would like to have one—  
Who would not enjoy such a treat?

"I cannot think how your good mother affords  
To feed you on victuals like this;  
My father has just the same wages as yours,  
But doesn't give mother all his.

"You see sister Susan is so fond of dress,  
(She's older than me by three years;)  
She will have her way, and I leave you to guess  
That sometimes we've little but tears.

"'Twas only last week that she quite set her heart  
On a wreath of red roses and green,  
To wear round her head like the ladies, you know;  
She said she would look like a queen.

"She's pretty, they say, I don't see it myself—  
I think she looks foolish and vain;  
Be that as it may, she's no comfort to us—  
I'd rather by far she were plain.

“She determined to go to the dance t’other night,  
In the room at the ‘Hatchet and Wood;’  
She came home at midnight, and father was cross,  
And said she would come to no good.

“And so, you see, mother gets worried and plagued  
For money by night and by day,  
And says, just for peace and for quietness sake,  
That Susan shall have her own way.

“But I can assure you, if you will believe,  
We often have nothing to eat;  
And there’s little Charley, the doctor has said,  
That he should have plenty of meat.

“But we are in debt to the butcher, I know,  
And the baker will trust us no more,  
And the landlord has call’d for his rent many times,  
And says he’ll soon show us the door.

“Then that beautiful shawl, that my mother would buy  
Last winter to go to the play;  
The people won’t wait any longer, you see,  
But say they’ll compel her to pay.

“So father gets angry, as you may suppose,  
And isn’t to blame, that I see;  
For supper at night, he has often no more  
Than bread, with a poor cup of tea.

“So he takes up his hat, and flings out of the house,  
Like an angry and quarrelsome man,  
And says, if he cannot find comfort at home,  
He’ll go to a place where he can.

“And when he comes knocking late into the night,  
We tremble to open the door.  
I’m sorry for father, it isn’t his fault,  
He always was sober before.

“If mother and Susan would keep the house neat,  
Nor let such extravagance come,  
We’d have a nice pie, just the print of your own,  
And father would keep to his home.

“But why should I keep you out here in the street,  
Whilst I have my troubles to tell?  
If you’ll let me, Fanny, I’ll come to your house,  
To learn how you manage so well.”

SIXTY YEARS AGO.

---

Look back to England sixty years ago!

The schoolboy then, is now a man in years ;  
The village beauty has a wrinkled brow,  
A tottering step, and furrows for her tears.

The gravestones, then so white, are broken down,  
Grown o'er with creeping moss and lichens grey ;  
And the green hillock hardly can be shown  
Where the young infant by its mother lay.

Yet let us turn to those old times again,  
And take a parting look before they fade ;  
A little while, and those who acted then  
Will only live in footprints they have made.

The flying "train" was then a hidden thing;  
The gas-lit city but a fairy dream ;  
And gold fields—common now as flowers in spring—  
And boiling water moving ships by steam—

Such things as these, but sixty years ago,  
Had been a fable for a wise man's scorn ;  
For people always have been very slow  
To think that wiser people might be born.

But, though they knew not these, and would have thought  
The man a fool, a madman, or a liar,  
Who dare affirm a message might be brought  
By sea and land upon a slender wire ;

Yet they had knowledge that we ill can spare,  
And thrifty ways we should not lay aside ;  
Our science has not yet outwitted care,  
Nor learning shown the ignorance of pride.

The great mill cities had not risen then,  
To draw the labourer from the country air ;  
He work'd the corn-land, and he drain'd the fen,  
With hardy vigour and on frugal fare.

Then village sires lived on to see their sons  
Settled beside them on the self-same farms ;  
Great emigrations had not then begun—  
Their little properties had many charms.

They fed their cows upon the common land,  
Their goslings nibbled where we drive the plough ;  
The Acts of Parliament were scarcely plann'd  
Which make enclosures round those commons now.

A spinning-wheel was seen at every door,  
And knitting-needles were in every hand ;  
Good knitted stockings were a precious store,  
And busy housewives had a great demand.

Then, every little lass could milk a cow,  
And print the butter with her mother's pat ;  
Could heat the great brick oven to a glow,  
And fill with snowy curd the brimming vat.

A cup of tea was then for ladies' drink,  
For working people it was far too dear ;  
How little did those thrifty housewives think  
'Twould soon be common as their home-brew'd beer !



The village maid with modesty was dress'd,  
"A lilac cotton" bounded her desires;  
And flower'd kerchief, folded on her breast,  
With all the grace simplicity requires.

No flaunting finery was then display'd,  
The prudent mothers then discouraged show;  
You might have known the mistress from her maid,  
In those old times, some sixty years ago.

And girls had then a modest pride to keep  
A blameless character untouch'd by shame;  
And parents then would break their hearts and weep,  
If their young daughter lost her maiden fame.

'Tis not so now—with gossip, dress, and play,  
And great neglect upon the mothers' part,  
Sweet modesty is flying far away,  
And England mourns it with a bleeding heart.

Where are the future mothers of the free  
And noble sons of Britons' favour'd land?  
Not those bold, dressy creatures that we see—  
With flippant tongue, loose life, and lazy hand.

Shame on you, mothers! is it come to this,  
You care so little for your daughters' shame?  
You see her plunging in a vile abyss,  
And call dishonour by an easy name.

Look to it, mothers! 'tis a fearful thing  
To have the charge of souls that never die;  
In that great day of solemn reckoning,  
Where will the wanton and the careless fly?

Where will the souls committed to your care,  
Stand in the judgment on that awful day ?  
Now is the time for diligence and prayer,  
To walk before them in the narrow way.

'Tis not enough to talk, to scold, to beat,  
The living lesson they will take from you ;  
Their quick discernment you will never cheat,  
They heed not what you say—but what you do.

Oh, English matrons ! guide and guard the young,  
Still take the lead in purity of life ;  
All round the world your praises have been sung,  
And the sweet virtues of an English wife.

We have gone backward, let us turn again,  
And do our duty with a cheerful brow ;  
Let women be good helpmates to the men,  
Improving still on sixty years ago.

THE END.

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